LEARNING TO COLONIZE: STATE KNOWLEDGE, EXPERTISE, AND THE MAKING OF THE FIRST FRENCH EMPIRE, 1661-1715

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Abstract

As recent scholarship has recognized, administrative knowledge-making was crucial to the formation of "modern" European states. This dissertation explores an important new domain of state knowledge in seventeenth-century France: overseas empire. When King Louis XIV began his personal reign in 1661, France lagged behind its European rivals as a maritime power, and control of its scattered fleets, ports, and colonies lay almost exclusively in private hands. Five decades later, Louis's empire was the most powerful in Europe, and managed by royal officials according to well-defined protocols. Scholars have tended to cast the governance of France's empire as an extension of "royal absolutism" to the New World. But in fact, there was no essentialized absolutism to be applied to the Americas in this period, only a rapidly shifting and contested set of practices. The records left behind by leading officials who served in Canada and the Caribbean reveal how administrators on the ground tailored a new suite of policies and procedures for the colonies through a collective process of learning. Their knowledge was rooted in firsthand experience of plantation management, overseas trade, urban planning, imperial rivalry, local jurisprudence, and indigenous diplomacy and warfare, all of which involved daily encounters with the unruly colonists, "barbaric savages," and African slaves they sought to govern. By regulating and recording affairs for their superiors at court, they transformed the administration of colonies into a distinct realm of expertise, or "*science*," controlled by the state. Ultimately, their experience encouraged the Old Regime monarchy to see the colonies as distinct from the metropole—alike in the fact

of their difference and therefore comprising, in the eyes of royal officials, a common imperial project.

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Introduction

Grenada, November 27, 1702. In a decaying fort whose roof leaks so badly that "it rains [in here] like it does in the Street," the newly arrived governor, Joseph de Bouloc, fears for the safety of his post. The French have been planting sugar and indigo on this small island at the southern tip of the Grenadine chain for more than half a century, and over the past thirty-six years they have relied on the fort to shield them from enemies both real and imagined: vengeful Caribs, rebellious slaves, foreign invaders, and stateless raiders. Grenada belongs to France's New World empire, which has swelled from its humble sixteenth-century origins to encompass vast dominions in Canada, Acadia, Louisiana, Guyana, and the West Indies. To no one's surprise, war has broken out between the great powers of Europe over the right of Louis's grandson to inherit the Spanish throne—recently vacated by the timely death of the ineffectual, sickly, and childless Carlos II—and Bouloc knows it is only a matter of time before their various colonies join the fray. Now, to protect this remote corner of the realm, he is desperate to patch up the crumbling defenses around him.[1]

But even at this critical moment, Bouloc is powerless to make repairs without the funds needed to purchase building supplies, pay an engineer, recruit a team of skilled workers, and hire out slaves from local planters, and so he sits down to write an urgent appeal to Navy Minister Jérôme Phélypeaux de Pontchartrain, his patron in France. He is doing so from a difficult, indeed embattled position. A minor nobleman and experienced cavalry officer who had come to Pontchartrain's attention as a retainer in the entourage of the king's brother, Philippe d'Orléans, he had once

[1] "Procès verbal d'une visite aux fortifications de l'isle de Grenade," 25 November 1702, Archives

seemed like a fine choice to oversee a distant colony on a wartime footing, where he could be trusted to serve loyally and competently while the minister tended to more pressing affairs.[2] Already, however, the Grenadians have soured on him. In a flurry of outraged missives to his superiors at Martinique, they complain bitterly that Bouloc is exploiting Pontchartrain's benign neglect to rule Grenada like a petty tyrant—usurping the authority of the local judge, pillaging the royal depot, and monopolizing both legal and clandestine avenues of trade. "I should have thought he would be a model for all the best governors of America," laments Intendant François-Roger Robert, the king's chief civilian administrator in the Caribbean, "that we would see in him an Example of virtue, piety, moderation, [and] disinterest, a Father of the People, an exact observer of the King's regulations and ordinances; and that he would combine with these qualities an admirable deference to the advice that one might wish to give him. But he has appeared to be the opposite of all that since he arrived in Grenada."[3]

If Bouloc is aware of the accusations swirling around him, his letter betrays no sign of it. Yet in pressing the urgency of his proposed repairs, he cannot help but vent his frustration with the way things are done in the colonies. Exasperated at having to seek funding and approval from the governor-general and Robert (who has promised him only a "modest" sum), he declares impatiently that he "will not live long enough to see [these works] completed if you leave Monsieur the Intendant in

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[2] For Bouloc's early career in the colonies, see his personnel dossier, "Bouloc, Joseph de," ANOM COL E, vol. 45.

[3] These complaints would continue into the following year, at least. Robert to Pontchartrain, 26 June 1702, ANOM COL C8A, vol. 14, f. 160v; 28 October 1702, ANOM COL C8A, vol. 14, f. 267v-270 ("Example of virtue"); 10 February 1703, ANOM COL C8A, vol. 15, f. 85v; "Extraits de lettres reçues des Iles annotées par Pontchartrain," 1704, ANOM COL C8B, vol. 2, pièce 73 (letters of Machaut de Bellemont and Montrayer).

charge of sending me the funds intended for them." Why, he wonders, must a governor of Grenada, who is responsible for the colony's defense, submit his plans to the scrutiny of officers stationed 180 miles away? "How can they reason correctly about a place that neither of them has ever seen?" The arrangement defies not only logic, he argues, but also the hallowed administrative customs observed in the metropole. "I am quite new to the practices (*usages*) of the Navy," he admits, but

> I had believed [the funding of fortifications] was practiced as it is in the landed services, where each year the minister sends local Governors an Account of the funds intended as much for the expansion of [new] fortifications as for the upkeep of those already built, which funds are placed in the hands of the treasurer, after which the Governor visits the sites with an Engineer to see what must be done, to have quoted in his presence the cost of all the works determined to be absolutely necessary, and also to see that the laborers who have done the work are paid.[4]

In France, in other words, he would have had ready access to the funds necessary to do his duty as he sees fit. In the colonies, by contrast, he must depend on the goodwill of distant bean counters whose bureaucratic machinations have left him wholly incapable of defending Grenada and, by extension, his honor. "It would be quite sad for me, My Lord, to have come here from 2,000 leagues away only to lose the esteem that I have earned myself in France," he grumbles.[5]

The problem for Bouloc, besides the threat of invasion and the denunciations heaped upon him by his fellow officials, is that the practices of governance here seem foreign to him—and indeed they are. For the past four decades, royal officials across the colonies have been working out their own ways of doing things in response to

[4] Bouloc to Pontchartrain, 27 November 1702, ANOM COL C10A, vol. 1, dossier 3, pièce 82, p. 2.
[5] Bouloc to Pontchartrain, 27 November 1702, p. 3.

local exigencies. It is not only military expenditures that operate differently in the New World, but also the day-to-day business of justice, trade, conscription, labor, urban planning, warfare, taxation, and diplomacy. Like any seasoned administrator, Bouloc has had ample experience bringing men and matériel together to achieve the king's objectives. Yet his metropolitan career has proven an unreliable guide to action in a place whose rituals and rhythms of life are unfamiliar. Even his fellow officers, while ostensibly French, seem like strange, almost monstrous versions of their European selves. They have "metamorphosed into Panurges," he will complain, referring to the cowardly rogue in Rabelais's *Gargantua and Pantagruel*. Some, like the judge, are symbols of disorder as "frightening" as rebellious slaves, exercising their public duties without the sumptuary accoutrements—wigs, hats, ties, and coats—typically worn by men of their position. With "nothing above them but the burning American Sun" and "only its rays to fear," they ignore precedent and good sense to do whatever they think best, "like the gentlemen in Molière, who know all without ever having learned a thing."[6] Stymied in his labors and beset on all sides by agents of chaos, Bouloc portrays his own imperious hand, working through tried and true metropolitan protocols, as the sole means of asserting royal authority on the island.

Pontchartrain will disagree, but to the governor's good fortune, the minister will forgive his alleged misconduct with no more than a stern warning to observe the customs of the colony and the limits of his commission. And in the years to come,

[6] Bouloc to Pontchartrain, 1 March 1704, 1 December 1704, and 20 April 1708, ANOM COL C10A, vol. 1, dossier 3, pièces 86 ("American Sun"), 88 ("Panurge"), and 111 ("wig"). Bouloc claimed in 1708 that he had been pleading with the judge for six years to hold the king's trials in proper dress and without a tobacco pipe in his mouth, but to no avail.

Bouloc will learn to navigate the political landscape around him with greater skill. Not only will he survive numerous disputes with rival administrators in Grenada and Martinique, he will also become an innovator in his own right, proposing reforms to colonial settlement and the slave trade, new ways to discourage piracy, and less confrontational methods of pacifying the indigenous Caribs, all based on "the long time we have spent in the islands and our continuous efforts to study [their inhabitants]."[7] He will see the colony safely through much of the war, which will rage until 1713. His crowning achievement will be a brand-new fort, completed posthumously in 1710 and destined to survive him by 306 years (and counting).[8]

This embattled official, appealing desperately for money from a leaky hut in a tiny fort on a far-flung island, may not seem like one of the founders of the French colonial empire. And yet it was through the mundane, often messy efforts of men like Bouloc that the crown came to see its American possessions as different: different from the metropole, different from conquered lands in Europe, and different from the classical world colonized by Greece and Rome. Overseas territories, the monarchy gradually surmised, could not be ruled like existing French provinces, nor incorporated and governed like Alsace or Flanders or Franche-Comté (all of which were annexed to France under Louis XIV). Their populations, logistical needs, and administrative and military resources were just too different. As officials on the ground struggled to impose a familiar brand of "order" on the king's scattered New

[7] Bouloc to Pontchartrain, 1 March 1704, ANOM COL C10A, dossier 3, pièce 86, p. 5 and the other pièces cited above.

[8] Bouloc's Fort Royal, renamed Fort George following the British takeover of the island in 1763, is now home to the Royal Grenada Police Force.

World dominions, their superiors in Paris and Versailles concluded that the colonies required a governance all their own.

This dissertation tells the previously unknown story of how French officials like Bouloc learned to govern overseas colonies and, in the process, transformed the Old Regime monarchy into an imperial state. The pages that follow will provide a reinterpretation of two interconnected histories: the early modern origins of French imperial *science* (more on this term in a moment), and the emergence of France's various New World possessions *as an empire*—united by their difference from the metropole and therefore comprising, in the eyes of royal officials, a common imperial project. In the first place, I want to show that the animating ideas and everyday practices of colonial rule, as subjects of extensive reflection and debate among royal servants, were a creation of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, and to provide a new take on why this was so. In the second place, I will argue that the unprecedented political, naval, and territorial expansion undertaken during the personal reign of Louis XIV (1661-1715) encouraged his agents to observe and order the world around them in radically new ways. As French officers confronted unfamiliar peoples and problems in the Americas, they began to think like colonizers, with profound consequences for the exercise of state power in the New World as well as the Old. By the end of Louis's reign, they had developed a nascent administrative science tailored to the governance of an overseas empire.

The process of learning how to rule colonies was rapid, dynamic, intense, violent, and subject to a logic all its own. In these decades of fierce imperial rivalry both on and over the seas, Louis's fledgling New World dominions seemed to call for

immediate and sustained intervention by the crown if they were to survive. Yet there were no pre-packaged policies or procedures in place to dictate how they should be administered. The men dispatched by Louis to govern them on his behalf were, for the most part, experienced military and civilian administrators (to draw a distinction they would not have recognized as clearly as we do), but they had never before seen political arenas as foreign as sugar plantations worked by African slaves, diplomatic councils hosted by Amerindian "savages," or settlements carved out of a "wilderness" and peopled by the king's "meanest" subjects. In response, they cobbled together techniques of governance from an array of sources at hand: their training in France's fleets and ports, printed news and histories of the colonies, the example of rival empires, the advice of resident informants, and above all their own experience in the Americas. In reporting their conclusions to superiors in France, they constructed a suite of political practices, grounded in empirical observation, that would underpin French imperial policies through the fall of the Old Regime.

The crucial question of how European states came to see their scattered overseas colonies as elements of a single, coherent political project was not limited to France, of course, and the conclusions I draw here are therefore suggestive for other European empires. Historians of Britain, Spain, France, Portugal, and the Netherlands have long debated the origins of imperialism in those nations. Much of their research has focused on metropolitan discourses—how a variety of people in London, Paris, Amsterdam, Lisbon, or Madrid began to perceive empire as both an affair of state and a fundamental aspect of national identity.[9] What I provide is

[9] David Armitage, *The Ideological Origins of the British Empire* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2000); Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707-1837* (New Haven, CT: Yale

another way of approaching the problem: to understand how the Old Regime monarchy defined itself as a colonial empire, and not just a state that possessed colonies, I look to events on the ground, where interactions between royal administrators, settlers, indigenous peoples, and slaves taught the crown to think of colonization across the Americas as a collective problem of governing difference.[10]

The process of governing difference through firsthand experience and reportage represented a momentous shift in the everyday practice of French statecraft and the values that animated it. For contemporary political theorists, the king, and his servants, the stated ends of politics were glory, renown, and eternal salvation under God. These supposedly timeless aims implied fixed qualities of rule: as Robert so neatly put it, those entrusted by God and king to lead others should be examples of virtue, piety, moderation, and disinterest, fathers of the people who commanded obedience and in turn obeyed their father-king, observing his regulations and ordinances with precision. But even in France itself, the meanings of those virtues, and their application in practice, were subject to constant debate and reinterpretation. Louis XIV's regime was neither the homogeneous nation-state later portrayed by

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University Press, 2005); Kathleen Wilson, ed., *A New Imperial History: Culture, Identity, and Modernity in Britain and its Empire, 1660-1840* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2004); J. H. Elliott, *Empires of the Atlantic World: Britain and Spain in America, 1492-1830* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2007); Benjamin Schmidt, *Inventing Exoticism: Geography, Globalism, and Europe's Early Modern World* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015); Anthony Pagden, *Lords of All the World: Ideologies of Empire in Spain, Britain and France c. 1500-1800* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995); David A. Bell, *The Cult of the Nation in France: Inventing Nationalism, 1680-1800* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003), 78-106. For an alternative approach that balances metropolitan and colonial discourses in the forging of imperialist thought, see Gabriel Paquette, *Enlightenment, Governance, and Reform in Spain and its Empire, 1759-1808* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008) and the collective portrait painted by the essays in Sophus Reinert and Pernille Røge, eds., *The Political Economy of Empire in the Early Modern World* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013).

[10] On the problem of cultural difference as a central, driving phenomenon in the history of empires, see Jane Burbank and Frederick Cooper, *Empires in World History: Power and the Politics of Cultural Difference* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2010).

nationalist historians nor the "tranquil and sterile despotism" described by Alexis de Tocqueville; rather, it was a loose patchwork of provincial customs and institutions held together by a dynamic interplay of collaboration, repression, and charismatic self-fabrication.[11] The diverse, composite nature of the kingdom encouraged such flexible repertoires of governance. Under the pens of Louis's apologists, famously, the paternal role of the king took on a decidedly more coercive bent, and "observing exactly" his regulations and ordinances became not only a cardinal principle of so-called "absolutism" but also a powerful means of enforcing discipline among his subjects and servants (as Robert's denunciation likewise attests).[12] Less famously, Louis's Navy Minister and Controller-General of Finance, Jean-Baptiste Colbert, enhanced the political pre-eminence of the monarchy by importing merchant practices of accounting and observation into the world of government paperwork, obsessively gathering and deploying information about the kingdom in ways that undermined the crown's entrenched rivals for public authority, the aristocratic *parlements* and the Catholic Church. Some contemporaries opposed these developments as pernicious innovations, but others saw no contradiction between an expansive, empirically-

[11] The relevant literature on the louis-quatorzian state is vast. See the works cited elsewhere in this introduction, as well as William Beik, "The Absolutism of Louis XIV as Social Collaboration," *Past & Present*, vol. 188, no. 1 (August 2005): 195-224; David Parker, *Class and State in Ancien Régime France: The Road to Modernity?* (London: Routledge, 1996); Peter Burke, *The Fabrication of Louis XIV* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004). Tocqueville quoted in Lucien Jaume, *Tocqueville: The Aristocratic Sources of Liberty*, trans. Arthur Goldhammer (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2013), 278.

[12] Examples of royal servants who denounced each other for failing to observe the king's codes of conduct, courtesy, and administration are legion, and their increasing frequency in the seventeenth century across a variety of milieux attests to the growing rhetorical power of this line of attack. See, for example, Orest Ranum, "Courtesy, Absolutism, and the Rise of the French State, 1630-1660," *The Journal of Modern History*, vol. 52, no. 3 (1980): 426-451; Norbert Elias, *The Court Society* (Dublin: University College Dublin Press, 2006 ed.). On the making of Louis's public image, see Burke, *Fabrication* and Orest Ranum, *Artisans of Glory: Writers and Historical Thought in Seventeenth-Century France* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1980).

minded absolutist state and the traditional social and political values of the realm.[13] The efforts of royal officers to translate their knowledge of the colonies into suitable customs and ordinances grew out of this broader campaign to extend control over the king's expanding, diverse, and notoriously fractious domains, and they make us question assumptions about the Old Regime state by showing us how it maintained a presence in marginal places where its authority was strained to its limits.

This story has not been told in part because historians have so often taken the collapse of France's first colonial empire for granted, treating it as a mere prelude to the formation of modern nation-states in France, Canada, Great Britain, the United States, and the Caribbean. Since its demise in 1763, no one political community has emerged to take ownership of its legacy, and as a result the various components of the empire have been absorbed into distinct historiographies that rarely speak to one another. Even in France, where memory of French adventures in the New World has sometimes served to bolster claims to a unique imperial destiny or "genius," the lost early modern colonies of the Americas have long been overshadowed by their more "successful" modern counterparts in Asia and Africa. When France's first empire has been invoked at all, nationalist scholars have found it politically expedient to either dismiss or romanticize it as a rigid monolith doomed to failure, much like the Old Regime from which it sprang.[14]

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[13] Jacob Soll, *The Information Master: Jean-Baptiste Colbert's Secret State Intelligence System* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2009); John Rule and Ben S. Trotter, *A World of Paper: Louis XIV, Colbert de Torcy, and the Rise of the Information State* (Montréal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2014).

[14] Gilles Havard and Cécile Vidal, "Making New France New Again: French Historians Rediscover Their American Past," *Common-Place*, vol. 7, no. 4 (July 2007), URL: http://www.common-place-archives.org/vol-07/no-04/harvard/ (accessed 3 July 2016); Cécile Vidal, "The Reluctance of French Historians to Address Atlantic History," *Southern Quarterly*, vol. 43, no. 4 (2006): 153-89; Alyssa Goldstein Sepinwall, "Atlantic Amnesia? French Historians, the Haitian Revolution, and the 2004-

Recent trends in the field, meanwhile, have made it more difficult to excavate the administrative origins of French imperial governance, despite a flood of works on empire. The newfound emphasis upon borderlands and subaltern actors has shifted attention away from problems of policy and administration that long dominated the sort of archivally-broad, top-down studies of empire now blamed (rightly, in many cases) for ignoring the colonized and perpetuating the language of the colonizers.[15] Eager to challenge the exaggerated image of European sovereignty conveyed in contemporary maps, charters, and other state documents—and accepted too readily by nationalist historians and today's textbook writers—scholars of late have downplayed the role of governing structures in shaping colonization.[16] Institutions are out, along with the people who staffed them, except insofar as their weakness can be shown to enable the kind of widely diffused agency, cultural hybridity, and promiscuous movement of people and goods currently ascribed to most early colonial settings. Some historians have rejected the imperial perspective altogether, favoring Atlantic, continental, or frontier frameworks that seem better equipped to capture processes whose contours frequently transcended imperial boundaries.[17] In their telling, colonial power was not imposed by metropolitan governments, but rather negotiated

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2006 CAPES Exam," *Proceedings of the Western Society for French History*, vol. 34 (2006), URL: http://hdl.handle.net/2027/spo.0642292.0034.019 (accessed 3 July 2016).

[15] For a formative statement of this turn toward what is now called the New Imperial history, see Wilson, ed., *A New Imperial History*. Jane Burbank and Fred Cooper provide a more recent one. Burbank and Cooper, *Empires in World History*.

[16] On the ways in which nationalist frameworks continue to shape public and scholarly conceptions of France's North American empire, including exaggerated visions of territorial sovereignty perpetuated in textbooks, see Catherine Desbarats and Allan Greer, "Où est la Nouvelle-France?," *Revue d'histoire de l'Amérique française*, vol. 64, no. 3-4 (hiver-printemps 2011): 31-62.

[17] These competing frameworks are examined and represented in Philip D. Morgan and Jack P. Greene, eds., *Atlantic History: A Critical Appraisal* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009). For a defense of the imperial perspective, see Trevor Burnard, "Empire Matters? The Historiography of Imperialism in Early America, 1492–1830," *History of European Ideas*, vol. 33, no. 1 (2007): 87–107.

or contested among ordinary people on the ground—free and enslaved, European and not—whose multifarious encounters served as crucibles of our modern politics of cultural difference.[18]

As colonial historians have attributed greater political power to bottom-up localism over top-down statism, historians of the state have questioned whether or not early modern France even had an empire worthy of the name. The word itself rarely appeared in discourses of the time, prompting some scholars to reject the term altogether.[19] Others have embraced it as a category of analysis but found France's colonies wanting for the sort of demographic and economic "development," centralized political authority, robust communications, "integrative markets," and sustained metropolitan commitment that supposedly characterizes true or "successful" empires. The titles of their works aptly reflect the argument: for the Old Regime, overseas empire was something "elusive," "chased," or sought after but not achieved until later.[20] Instead of an empire, we are told, what Louis XIV's France had was a scattered collection of colonies with little in common but their neglect.[21]

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[18] A touchstone example being Jack P. Greene, *Negotiated Authorities: Essays in Colonial Political and Constitutional History* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1994), 1-24. On empire as an engine of the modern politics of cultural difference, see Burbank and Cooper, *Empires in World History*.

[19] James S. Pritchard, *In Search of Empire: The French in the Americas, 1670-1730* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2004), xx, 263. James Muldoon has explained why early modern rulers were reluctant to embrace explicitly the language of *imperium*. James Muldoon, *Empire and Order: The Concept of Empire, 800-1800* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999). On variable uses of the term in the political discourses of early modern Spain, Britain, and France, see Pagden, *Lords of All the World*.

[20] Pritchard, *In Search of Empire*; Banks, *Chasing Empire Across the Sea: Communications and the State in the French Atlantic, 1713-1763* (Montréal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2006); Eric Hinderaker, *Elusive Empires: Constructing Colonialism in the Ohio Valley, 1673-1800* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

[21] Pritchard, *In Search of Empire*, esp. 230-263.

Broadly speaking, these parallel trends have left us with two competing images of France's early modern empire. One, focused on real people and places, views empire as a mundane struggle for power that played out across multiple cultures and social ranks but only rarely according to anyone's intentions (least of all those of the crown); the other, focused on bureaucratic "machinery," communications "networks," and other abstract agents of royal power, treats empire as a goal conceived and pursued according to prefabricated "European" or "absolutist" ideals.[22] One casts empire as a byproduct of everyday encounters between individuals who acted according to their own motives, while the other paints it as an unrealized ambition chased by disembodied European structures. In one case, empire is everywhere; in the other case, it is confined to the French imagination. In both cases, local realities give the lie to grandiose metropolitan claims to sovereignty over far-flung peoples and territory.

Yet even as both approaches do the important work of challenging exaggerated narratives of French dominion in the New World, they pose serious interpretive obstacles of their own. The otherwise salutary attention of colonial historians to the day-to-day practices and meanings of empire on the ground, and the resulting "discovery" of agency among a wide array of previously neglected indigenous and enslaved peoples, makes it difficult to explain the very real growth of

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[22] For examples of the former approach, see Havard and Vidal, *Histoire de l'Amérique française* (Paris: Flammarion, 2003); Gilles Havard, *Empire et métissages: Indiens et français dans le Pays d'en Haut, 1660-1715* (Paris: Septentrion, 2003); Sophie White, *Wild Frenchmen and Frenchified Indians: Material Culture and Race in Colonial Louisiana* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013); Gainot, *L'empire colonial français*. For the latter, see James McClellan and François Regourd, *The Colonial Machine: French Science and Overseas Expansion in the Old Regime* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2011); Banks, *Chasing Empire* ("networks"); Pritchard, *In Search of Empire*. A trenchant critique of the latter approach is provided by Paul Cheney and Loïc Charles, "The Colonial Machine Dismantled: Knowledge and Empire in the French Atlantic," *Past & Present*, vol. 219, no. 1 (2013): 127-163.

French imperial power in this period. There is no denying that royal authority was subject to negotiation, contestation, and reappropriation by local societies. And yet, somehow, by 1715, the crown's military, diplomatic, and commercial presence in the Americas *was* dramatically more elaborate and centralized, and not only on paper: the king's fleets, ports, officer corps, customs revenues, courts of justice, and indigenous alliances were demonstrably greater and more sophisticated at his death than they had been when he first assumed direct rule of his colonies in Canada (1663) and the Caribbean (1674). How did this happen if governing structures were utterly weak?

Historians who deny the existence of a French empire have likewise failed to deliver on this crucial question. The notion that scholars should not call Louis XIV's France an "empire" because few contemporaries employed the label flies in the face of established academic practice (one wonders how many studies could be undertaken without recourse to modern analytical concepts, or how useful such studies would be). Those who find France's colonies lacking the cohesion necessary to comprise an empire, meanwhile, impose a dubious standard. Primarily concerned with institutions and structures, they attribute any perceived failures of colonization to a lack of political will, while every achievement is defined by its correspondence to "successful" models, namely eighteenth-century Britain (imagined as laissez-faire, demographically "developed," and economically "integrated") and modern France (portrayed as bureaucratic and statist). They encourage us to believe that "empire" was indeed something desired and obtainable at this time, yet also fatally undermined by administrative incoherence or inattention, at least until someone strong or willful enough (Louis XV? Napoleon? Napoleon III?) finally came along to achieve it. What

sort of empire the French were seeking, and who exactly was seeking it, is rarely examined in any detail, and the result, predictably, is analytical confusion ("the elusive empire existed and continued to exist").[23]

The fundamental flaw in strictly "top-down" or "bottom-up" perspectives is that neither bridges the gap between metropolitan discourses and local practices to explain how imperial repertoires of governance actually took shape. The flaw is compounded by the longstanding failure of most historians of the colonies and the metropole to engage meaningfully with each other's work. Although colonial historians no longer believe that Louis XIV or his ministers had a coherent vision of colonization, they continue to treat the meanings and practices of absolutism in France as a static monolith.[24] For their metropolitan colleagues, meanwhile, Louis's New World dominions seem so far from the center of the action as to be hardly worth studying at all.[25] In the absence of any substantive or sustained dialogue, the two sides continue to view each other's histories as separate, even though Old Regime France and its colonies emerged in tandem, governed by many of the same people and subject to many of the same historical processes.[26]

Indeed, the dynamism of royal governance in the colonies reflected the dynamism of royal governance in France itself, where the complexion of the state

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[23] Pritchard, *In Search of Empire*, 420-423 ("elusive empire"); Banks, *Chasing Empire*; Bernard Gainot, *L'empire colonial français de Richelieu à Napoléon (1630-1810)* (Paris: Armand Colin, 2015).

[24] For a critique of the problem, see Havard and Vidal, "Making New France New Again."

[25] On this tendency in the literature, see Vidal, "The Reluctance of French Historians."

[26] For recent works that buck this trend and demonstrate the promise of studying metropolitan and colonial processes of state formation together, see Laurie Wood, "Archipelagoes of Justice: Law in France's Early Modern Empire" (PhD dissertation: University ofTexas-Austin, 2013); Helen Dewar, "'Y establir nostre auctorité: Assertions of Imperial Sovereignty through Proprietorships and Chartered Companies in New France, 1598-1663" (PhD dissertation: McGill University, 2012); Alexandre Dubé, "Les biens publics: Culture politique de la Louisiane française" (PhD dissertation: McGill University, 2010); Havard, *Empire et métissages*.

changed dramatically during this period from one decade to the next. By the time Louis began to remove the colonies from company rule and place them under his own direct administration, his predecessors had long been working to expand their political power at home. Responding to nearly a century of devastating religious warfare and civil strife, two cardinal-ministers, Richelieu and Mazarin, had employed various means of persuasion and force to bring the kingdom's willful elites into the royal fold. One of their creations, the royal intendants, had evolved from glorified quartermasters into the monarchy's "eyes and ears" in the provinces, where some received fixed appointments and even supplanted local notables as the chief brokers of influence with the crown. From the 1650s onward, Louis and his ministers expanded the mandates of their intendants and governors, gave them salaried commissions and teams of subordinates, and dispatched them to strategic places on the kingdom's margins such as ports and newly-conquered territories where they became the face of the king to inhabitants who had previously witnessed few, if any, incursions of royal authority. Meanwhile a host of bureaus arose in Paris and Versailles to process the growing tide of paperwork these officials produced. As the scope of the monarchy's political and military ambitions grew, then, so did the administrative structures required to service them. The expansion of officialdom multiplied the points of contact between Louis's agents and his subjects—defined and policed with ever greater sophistication as traders, taxpayers, conscripts, criminals, artisans, vagabonds, manufacturers, religious heretics, and so on—making the state an increasingly important presence in the everyday lives of ordinary people.[27]

[27] For a nuanced survey of these (admittedly much simplified) developments, see James B. Collins, *The State in Early Modern France* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1995), esp. 79-123.

Only in the past few years have conditions become ripe for a study that would link the histories of royal governance in France and its colonies as unfolding, interrelated problems of state learning. The king's administrators, of course, have long been a focus of historical writing about the formation of the Old Regime state.[28] First cast by Alexis de Tocqueville as all-powerful agents of royal "despotism," then by social and political historians as glorified negotiators whose fragile authority depended upon collaboration with traditional elites, the king's officials are now coming under scrutiny in a different role: as purveyors of knowledge. In recent years, historians have redirected the study of state formation toward the development of state *in*formation.[29] How did the king and his ministers collect, digest, and act upon the intelligence gathered by their agents? How did they train those agents to report and classify the sort of knowledge they considered most useful? And how did new,

[28] See Alexis de Tocqueville, *The Old Regime and the French Revolution*, trans. Stuart Gilbert (New York, 1998); Collins, *The State in Early Modern France*; Beik, "Social Collaboration" and *Absolutism and Society in Seventeenth-Century France: State Power and Provincial Aristocracy in Languedoc* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1985). Some prominent studies of the intendants in particular include Vivian Gruder, *The Royal Provincial Intendants: A Governing Elite in Eighteenth-Century France* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1968); Anette Smedley-Weill, *Les intendants de Louis XIV* (Paris: Fayard, 1995); Jean-Claude Dubé, *Les intendants de la Nouvelle-France* (Montreal: Fides, 1984).

[29] In addition to the works by Soll, Mukerji, and Ben Trotter and John Rule discussed below, see Giora Sternberg, "Manipulating Information in the Ancien Régime: Ceremonial Records, Aristocratic Strategies, and the Limits of the State Perspective," *The Journal of Modern History* 85, no. 2 (2013): 239-279. For a comparative perspective, see Randolph Head, "Knowing Like a State: The Transformation of Political Knowledge in Swiss Archives, 1450-1770," *The Journal of Modern History* 75, no. 4 (2003): 745-782; Paul S. Fritz, "The Anti-Jacobite Intelligence System of the English Ministers, 1715-1745," *The Historical Journal* 16, no. 2 (June 1973): 265-289; Mary Poovey, *A History of the Modern Fact: Problems of Knowledge in the Sciences of Wealth and Society* (Chicago, 1998), 92-143. On the broader culture of information management in early modern Europe, see Ann Blair, *Too Much to Know: Managing Scholarly Information Before the Modern Age* (New Haven, 2010). For a touchstone analysis of state knowledge, power, and administrative "legibility" in the modern period, see James C. Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1998).

more refined methods of compiling, organizing, and exploiting information change the role of the state in French society under the monarchy and beyond?[30]

These questions move beyond older, teleological debates about the transition of the Old Regime state from "feudal" to "modern," instead asking how the vaunting military, commercial, and political aims of a glory-hungry monarch encouraged his officials to study and act upon their surroundings in new ways. In the hands of historians and sociologists of knowledge, the concept of bureaucracy—traditionally one of the academy's most powerful sedatives—has been redefined from a shorthand for linear institutional development into a richly contested and contingent set of practices grounded in diverse (and firmly premodern) intellectual origins. Thus Jacob Soll has recast Colbert, as "a scholar of state learning: not simply a bureaucrat but an expert" whose "secret state intelligence system," shaped by humanist scholarship as well as merchant culture, became a powerful tool of governance that encouraged the use of empirical knowledge toward "public" ends.[31] Chandra Mukerji has proposed a more "distributive" view of state knowledge under Colbert, showing how entrepreneurs and noble officeholders transformed the vernacular "collective intelligence" of lower-status "technical experts"—including engineers, artisans, financiers, and peasant women—into impersonal knowledge through the media of paperwork and numeracy, imbued it with their own authority, and then marshaled it

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[30] The precise meanings of "knowledge," "intelligence," and "information" are not always defined in this literature. For my own purposes, I have found it most useful to treat knowledge as something produced by an individual "knower." I treat information and intelligence as less processed forms of observation, with the slight difference that intelligence comes from sources taken to be reliable, whereas information may come from unknown or unreliable sources. Both are more processed than, say, "data," which requires human action to become intelligible. In drawing these working distinctions, I roughly follow the definitions spelled out by Ann Blair and C. A. Bayly. Blair, *Too Much to Know*, 1-2; Bayly, *Empire and Information: Intelligence Gathering and Social Communications in India, 1780-1870* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 3.

[31] Soll, *Information Master*.

in the king's name to carry out major public works over fierce provincial opposition.[32] And in a detailed institutional study of the Bureau of Foreign Affairs under Colbert's nephew, Torcy, Ben Trotter and the late John Rule have provided a window onto the ministry's "actual workings of power" as they unfolded via routinized work, specialized tasks, and the everyday flow of people, paper, and objects through Torcy's offices.[33] Despite their differences, all of these scholars portray knowledge and power as inextricably bound under the Old Regime in ways that appear at once rooted in early modern cultures of learning and statecraft and suggestive of a modern *bürokratischer Staat*.[34] Together their research reveals an impulse among Louis XIV and his leading servants to cultivate in themselves a more "intelligent" brand of rule.[35]

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[32] By fusing noble and non-noble cultures of knowledge, Mukerji argues, the minister and his collaborators introduced a "more modern and effective" form of territorial control, as well as a growing tension between patrimonal conceptions of power and abstract discourses of technical proficiency. Chandra Mukerji, "Jurisdiction, Inscription, and State Formation: Administrative Modernism and Knowledge Regimes," *Theory and Society* 40, no. 3 (2011): 223-245; Mukerji, *Impossible Engineering: Technology and Territoriality on the Canal du Midi* (Princeton, 2009).

[33] John C. Rule and Ben S. Trotter, *A World of Paper: Louis XIV, Colbert de Torcy, and the Rise of the Information State* (Montréal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2014), 32.

[34] Soll and Mukerji join other historians of "political knowledge" in placing their work in dialogue with the touchstone theories of Weber and Michel Foucault. See Mukerji, "Jurisdiction, Inscription, and State formation"; Soll, *Information Master*, 9-14; Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (New York, 1977); Foucault, *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972-1977*, ed. Colin Gordon (New York, 1980); Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population: Lectures at the Collège de France 1977-1978* (New York, 2007).

[35] This turn toward the study of state knowledge has been propelled by a broader surge of interest in the history of knowledge *tout court*. Led by intellectual historians and historians of science and medicine, for whom the construction of knowledge is an abiding disciplinary concern, scholars have sought to replace a whiggish chain-of-ideas approach to intellectual culture with a more contingent, democratic, and interdisciplinary focus on practices of knowledge-making broadly defined. Their research has emphasized the social, cultural, and spatial dynamics that conditioned "truth" across a variety of intellectual traditions and milieux. As a result, we are beginning to learn as much about the epistemological foundations and embodied practices of cooking, prophecy, accounting, sex, midwifery, musical performance, and administration, for example, as we are about the emergence of hallowed disciplines such as botany or Biblical exegesis. On early modern practices of information management and their relationship to knowledge-making, see Ann Blair, *Too Much to Know* [cite, 2010]; Emilio Campi, *Scholarly Knowledge: Textbooks in Early Modern Europe* [cite]; Paul Nelles, "Libros de papel, libri bianchi, libri papyracei: Note-Taking Techniques and the Role of Student

The growing academic interest in political knowledge has drawn particular attention to the concept of expertise—namely its meanings, origins, and relationship to state power. In questioning what role expertise plays (or should play) in modern democratic arenas such as courtrooms and the media, scholars across the humanities and social sciences have produced a flurry of research into its early modern roots.[36] Although the term "expertise" is something of an anachronism—the word "expert," signifying someone well versed in a particular art through firsthand experience, appeared in French as early as the early seventeenth century, but "expertise" did not debut until the nineteenth century—it has helped scholars to think through a phenomenon new to the period: the advent of useful, exclusive, specialized, and increasingly systematic bodies of knowledge wielded by individuals generally recognized as authorities in their disciplines.[37] The legitimating force of state institutions was crucial to this process, because states helped to distinguish "experts" from mere "practitioners" at a time when public claims to authority were vigorously contested by people of differing ranks, genders, confessions, and educational

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Notebooks in the Early Jesuit Colleges," *Archivum historicum Societatis Iesu*, vol. 76 (2007): 75-112; *Intellectual History Review*, Special Edition: Note-Taking in Early Modern Europe, vol. 20, no. 3 (2010): 301-432. On cooking, see Amanda Herbert, *Female Alliances: Gender, Identity, and Friendship in Early Modern Europe* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2014), 78-117; on sex and midwifery, see Mary Fissell, "When the Birds and the Bees Were not Enough: *Aristotle's Masterpiece*," *The Public Domain Review* (2015), URL: http://publicdomainreview.org/2015/08/19/when-the-birds-and-the-bees-were-not-enough-aristotles-masterpiece/ (accessed 20 November 2015); on accounting, Jacob Soll, *The Reckoning: Financial Accountability and the Rise and Fall of Nations* (New York: Basic Books, 2014); on prophecy, Jonathan Green, *The Strange and Terrible Visions of Wilhelm Friess: The Paths of Prophecy in Reformation Europe* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2014); on history and health care, see Nancy Siraisi, *History, Medicine, and the Traditions of Renaissance Learning* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2007).

[36] Harry Collins and Robert Evans, *Rethinking Expertise* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007).

[37] See the entries on "Expert" and "Expertise" in the dictionaries (1606-1935) digitized by the University of Chicago's ARTFL Project, URL: http://artfl-project.uchicago.edu/node/17 (accessed 3 May 2016).

backgrounds who competed for the social and political rewards such distinction could bring. In arts ranging from law and medicine to mathematics, shipbuilding, midwifery, and scriptural exegesis, state-sanctioned experts put their knowledge in the service of rulers, allowing those rulers to pursue new kinds of action with greater force and at greater distances than ever before. The ability of early modern states to recognize, co-opt, and eventually control various bodies of expertise enabled them to undertake increasingly complex tasks, including the administration of far-flung overseas empires.[38] "Expertise," then, is something of a productive misnomer. I use it here to identify and analyze a group of officials who mobilized their experience in America to make authoritative claims about the measures necessary to govern New World colonies.

It is this collective body of expertise, forged in everyday acts of governance and filtered back to court through paperwork, that I call "*science*." At first glance this term, too, might seem anachronistic. After all, politics and public administration did not emerge as "scientific" disciplines in Europe until the eighteenth century or later, when learned elites self-consciously applied the positivist model of the natural sciences to the study of human affairs.[39] Yet *science*, understood simply as a branch of learning, was how colonial administrators described their knowledge. They

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[38] See the collected essays in Eric Ash, ed., *Expertise: Practical Knowledge and the Early Modern State* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010).

[39] Philippe Steiner, *La 'science nouvelle' de l'économie politique* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1998); Johan Hellbron, "The Rise of Social Science Disiplines in France," *Revue européenne des sciences sociales*, vol. 42, no. 129 (2004): 145-157; Eric Brian, *La mésure de l'État: Géomètres et administrateurs au XVIIIe siècle* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1994); Corinne Delmas, *Les rapports du savoir au pouvoir: l'Académie des sciences morales et politiques de 1832 à 1914* (PhD dissertation: Université de Paris IX-Dauphine, 2000); Andre Wakefield, *The Disordered Police State: German Cameralism as Science and Practice* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009); Fidel Tavarez, *The Commercial Machine: Reforming Imperial Commerce in the Spanish Atlantic, ca. 1740-1808* (PhD dissertation: Princeton University, 2016).

frequently invoked *science* (knowledge), *savoir-faire* (know-how), or *connaissances* (ideas and impressions formed by experience) to denote the lessons they had learned in the course of their duties. In doing so, they were no different from the king himself, whose edicts and declarations ordinarily began with the formula, "By Our certain *science*, full power, and Royal authority..."[40] Louis and his servants took it for granted that public acts were guided by the light of personal experience. In appropriating the term *science*, I aim to explain how colonial officials constructed a branch of political knowledge they considered to be distinct, useful, and proven according to the conventions of their time, not scientific in the way we understand that term today. Their learning resembled modern administrative science in the sense that they sought to establish laws, policies, and *usages* that were morally and politically sound, but what that meant, and how it was expressed in practice, would look quite different in 1750 or 1850 than it had in 1650 or 1700.

To capture the variety of ways in which administrators articulated, made credible, and preserved knowledge about the colonies, I draw on a wide range of sources, including state records, personal letters, print media, poetry, chronicles, family archives, and probate inventories, as well as maps and other images. Like knowledge itself, the written and visual artifacts cited here are the products of cultural constructs and material processes. Although much of my analysis will focus on case studies of individual officers, I will also stress that their learning was fundamentally social. The laws, regulations, ordinances, and other techniques of rule that emerged in the New World were elaborated less in the minds of solitary aristocrats scribbling

[40] See the entry on "Science" in the *Dictionnaire de l'Académie française* (1694).

away in their *cabinets* (or in tumble-down forts) than within bustling households, political councils, ministerial bureaus, and routine encounters with a variety of people on the ground. Historians often overlook the social side of administration because most administrative documents were written in a single, coherent voice that emphasized the heroic labors of their individual authors. But if read carefully, these records betray the presence of others who helped to produce them, or whose insights were mobilized to make claims about how a particular problem should be resolved. In that sense, they can tell us a great deal not only about how administrative ideas and practices took shape, but also about how they were passed down from one official to the next at a time when centralized archives and standardized methods of record-keeping were still in the making. It was largely through personal relationships with other people on the scene that officials arrived at the "facts" about the colonies—facts which were subsequently interpreted and preserved, through the ministrations of metropolitan clerks, into a *science* controlled by the state.[41]

The bulk of my sources were produced by approximately one hundred governors and intendants who served in France's New World colonies between 1663 and 1715. Not all were strictly royal appointees—approximately half were nominated by commercial companies or *seigneurs*, such as the West Indies Company—but all were approved, if not directly commissioned, by the crown, and they were responsible to it even if they simultaneously served the private interests of their patron-proprietors (in all cases they addressed their paperwork to the king or his navy

[41] For a similar insight about the primacy of personal relationships in shaping French administrative policies, albeit in a later period, see William Trumbull IV, *An Empire of Facts: Colonial Power, Cultural Knowledge, and Islam in Algeria, 1870-1914* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2014).

minister). In theory, governors were responsible for defense, diplomacy, and public order, whereas intendants oversaw commercial, judicial, and financial affairs. In practice, however, their respective spheres of action were ill defined and frequently subject to dispute (as they were in the case of Bouloc and Robert). They were assisted in their daily labors by teams of secretaries, clerks, scribes, and lesser officers, as well as domestic servants, members of household, and assorted hangers-on who lent support in a variety of ways.

In the chapters that follow, I will focus on the printed and scribal knowledge produced by these officials and their collaborators. It would have been possible, certainly, to study the administrative culture of empire among other royal servants, such as the clerks of the navy ministry in Paris, but that would have required a different approach from the one I have adopted here.[42] More important, it would have minimized the ideas and practices elaborated by officials on the ground, which, as I will argue in the conclusion, were decisive in shaping the way France's colonies would be ruled in the eighteenth century. The laws, ordinances, and *usages* that aimed to define relationships of power between the crown and its subjects emerged primarily from everyday encounters between royal administrators and the people they sought to govern, which should compel us to look more closely at the careers of these agents who stood at the crossroads of the local and the imperial.

Each of the following chapters tracks a separate theme in the shifting and overlapping efforts of royal officials to govern Louis XIV's overseas dominions.

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[42] The attitudes of various ministers toward the empire has received plenty of attention in histories of the individual colonies and of the ministry. A close study of their *commis*, on the other hand, has never been done, although such a work would undoubtedly reveal a great deal about how the empire was understood by the officers most responsible for its day-to-day administration in the metropole.

They proceed in roughly chronological fashion, beginning in the 1660s, with the crown's campaign to re-build the Royal Marine and revive its flagging colonies, and concluding with the dawn of a new reign and a new imperial politics around 1715. Through several case studies, I examine the people and problems that emerged most compellingly from my reading of the sources. Chapter 1 studies the transformation of the Arnoul family from a clan of courtiers and tax farmers into a naval and colonial administrative dynasty. Their experience shows how enterprising households took advantage of Louis's maritime ambitions to achieve traditional social and political aims, enriching and promoting themselves by learning to build ships, outfit fleets, and police ports and colonies in his name. The next chapter analyzes the ways in which three promoters of colonization envisioned the stakes of overseas expansion and proposed measures to carry it out. Their relationships to the crown differed, but they were alike in having firsthand experience of the colonies, a preoccupation with improving their governance, and a tendency to frame them as political entities distinct from the metropole and each other. Chapter 3 explains how this perception changed. Focusing on Intendant Antoine-Denis Raudot's project to establish Cape Breton Island as an entrepôt that would integrate the trade of France and its colonies, it explains how a series of economic and military crises around the turn of the eighteenth century spurred royal officials to think imperially. Chapter 4 turns to French administrators' diplomacy with indigenous peoples. By reconstructing the moments in which governors assumed ritual personas assigned to them by their Native allies, it demonstrates the close link between *science* and performance, and reveals how officials laid the empirical foundations for enduring myths about

indigenous "savagery" and European "civility" in French imperial culture. I follow with a brief conclusion and epilogue about France's empire later in the eighteenth century.

To be sure, there were many other individuals and themes that could have received equal attention, but did not. My aim in selecting these particular cases and writing them up as I have done is to give the processes of colonization and empire formation what literary historian Stephen Greenblatt has called "a touch of the real"—to emphasize ordinary, even banal events that give us a concrete sense of what people on the ground were up to and, in the process, to illustrate a key moment of transition between two very different periods of colonial rule.[43] This focus on individuals demands a sympathetic understanding of their settings and motives. It demands just as forcefully, however, that their settings and motives not be treated as natural or inevitable. This dissertation is written with those twin obligations in mind.

[43] Stephen Greenblatt, "The Touch of the Real," *Representations*, vol. 59 (Summer 1997): 14-29.

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Chapter 1. Becoming *bons marins sur terre*: State Knowledge, Maritime Empire, and the Arnoul Family's Turn to the Sea

"My son is working at everything under me for the sake of his instruction. [I am] seeking to make of him a *bon marin sur terre*, and I dare say paternally that he is not doing a bad job of it."
– Nicolas Arnoul to Jean-Baptiste Colbert (1669)

"Stay close to your desks and never go to sea,
And you all may be rulers of the Queen's Navy!"
– William S. Gilbert, *H.M.S. Pinafore* (1878)

Sometime during his second tenure as Royal Intendant of the Galleys at Marseille (1710-1719), Pierre Arnoul received a sonnet composed in his honor by his attorney, Ricard. Ricard opened by saluting the precocious intelligence and maturity that had propelled Arnoul to a well-traveled career as an administrator of the king's navy and galleys: "Epitome of virtue, model of wisdom / Arnoul sees what we have seen from his earliest years / Giving a thousand embellishments to several ports / And joining prudence to the fire of youth." Initially Ricard characterized the intendant's return to Marseille as a divine gift, but the poem's final lines made clear that Arnoul the administrator had not simply arrived fully formed from the heavens: "A true and illustrious image of your father. / Without fighting, you know how to emerge victorious in combat / And will cause it to be said, in following in his footsteps / That he could never surpass you except in age."[1] It was only in emulating his renowned father, Nicolas, who had preceded him as intendant (1665-1673), that Pierre had been

[1] The full text of Ricard's sonnet reads: "Abregé de vertu, modele de sagesse / Arnoul voy qu'on a vû de ses plus jeunes ans / Donner a plusieurs ports mille embellissements / Et joindre la prudence au feu de la jeunesse. / Pour faire son portrait vainement je m'empresse / Ma voix ne peut pousser que de foibles accens / Tandis que je voudroit v'ofrir un digne encens / Ma meuse sans parler veut v'admirer sans cesse. / Le Ciel avec nos voeux semblant être d'accord / Te fait pour nôtre bien intendant de ce port / De ton pere fameux illustre et vraye image. / Sans combatir tu sçais vaincre dans les combats / Et vas faire avoüer en marchant sur ses pas / Que jamais il ne pût te surpasser qu'en age." Ricard to Pierre Arnoul, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Nouvelles Acquisitions Françaises [hereafter BnF NAF] 21416, fol. 146 (ca. 1710-1719).

able to match and even to outstrip his achievements as an official of France's fleets and ports.

As both a resident of Marseille and a longtime client of the family, Ricard knew how active Arnoul *père* had been in grooming Pierre as his successor, even if that process was hardly as pre-ordained as the attorney's sonnet made it seem. In 1665 Nicolas had been "horrified" to learn that his son wished to become a Jesuit priest. With the encouragement of his patron, Controller-General of Finances and de facto Minister of the Navy Jean-Baptiste Colbert, he had plucked Pierre from a brilliant career at the elite Collège de Clermont in Paris and brought him to Provence to learn firsthand the art of managing the king's slave ships.[2] The training up of a royal official at his father's side was not unusual in Old Regime France, but this particular apprenticeship was extraordinary: no one had ever been raised for a career administering the fleets and ports of the realm.[3] Pierre's instruction would combine for the first time the technical as well as the bureaucratic aspects of maritime service, ultimately fashioning him into a new kind of royal officer, the naval administrative specialist. In mastering the variety of skills necessary to project French power overseas, Pierre would not only assure himself and his kinsmen a prominent role within Louis XIV's burgeoning empire—serving as intendant at Marseille, Toulon, Havre, Rochefort, and Cadiz while moulding his younger brother, Nicolas-François

[2] Colbert to N. Arnoul, BnF NAF 21306, fols. 169v-170 (Nov. 20, 1665). "Memoire sur la vie et sur les services de M. Arnoul a present intendant des galeres et du commerce," BnF NAF 21416, fol. 117 (ca. 1715).

[3] For some examples of royal officials trained by their fathers or other male relatives in this period, see John Rule, "A Career in the Making: The Education of Jean-Baptiste Colbert, Marquis de Torcy," *French Historical Studies* 19, no. 4 (1996): 967-996; Jacob Soll, "Managing the System: Colbert Trains His Son for the Great Intendancy," in *The Information Master: Jean-Baptiste-Colbert's Secret State Intelligence System* (Ann Arbor, 2009), 84-93; Louis Delavaud, *Un ministre de la marine: Jérôme Phélypeaux de Pontchartrain. Son éducation et ses premiers emplois, sa visite des ports de France en 1694, 1695 et 1696* (Rochefort, 1911).

de Nicolas-François, into an intendant of Martinique and of the galleys—but also advance a radical reorientation of his family's ambitions and lifestyle from Paris to Provence and from the land to the sea.[4]

The household apprenticeships of Pierre and Nicolas-François provide an opportunity to balance competing claims about the tectonic shift from an early-modern culture of royal service predicated on personal loyalties and patron-client bonds to one based increasingly (though never entirely) on formal instruction and technical expertise.[5] Many scholars have attributed the emergence of a professionalized state service to bureaucratization, the formation of royal corps and *écoles*, and the application of state power to ever more complex administrative tasks, and as a result they have tended to portray the process as a natural, even inevitable consequence of top-down efforts to "modernize" the state.[6] By contrast, the careers

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[4] Pierre served as intendant of Marseille (1673-1675, 1710-1719), Toulon (1675-1679), Havre (1680), Bayonne and the Île de Rhé (1681-1683), and Rochefort (1683-1688), in addition to stints as *intendant des classes* (1692-ca. 1710) and intendant of Marine at Cadiz (1702-?), among other posts mentioned below. Nicolas-François served as intendant of Martinique (1704-1715) and of the galleys (1719-1726) after spending two decades in lesser positions on campaign and in the ports.

[5] Studies of state-affiliated agents and institutions in the modern period show that the rational, disinterested bureaucracy described by Max Weber has never been more than an ideal type. See, for example, the touchstone works of Pierre Bourdieu on the social embeddedness of the modern state. Pierre Bourdieu, Loic J. D. Wacquant, and Samar Farage, "Rethinking the State: Genesis and Structure of the Bureaucratic Field," *Sociological Theory* 12, no. 1 (1994): 1-18; Bourdieu, *The State Nobility: Elite Schools in the Field of Power*, trans. Lauretta C. Clough (Palo Alto, 1996); Max Weber, *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology*, eds. Gunther Roth and Claus Wittich, 2 vols. (Berkeley, CA, 1978), esp. II: 956-1031.

[6] Some leading examples of this voluminous literature, which varies widely in its conclusions about the Old Regime state's "modernization" and modes of governance, include James Collins, *The State in Early Modern France* (Cambridge, UK, 1995); Michel Antoine, *Le Coeur de l'État: Surintendance, contrôle général et intendances des finances, 1552-1791* (Paris, 2003); William Beik, *Absolutism and Society in Seventeenth-Century France: State Power and Provincial Aristocracy in Languedoc* (Cambridge, UK, 1985); Sharon Kettering, *Patrons, Brokers, and Clients in Seventeenth-Century France* (New York, 1986); Guy Rowlands, *The Dynastic State and the Army under Louis XIV: Royal Service and Private Interest, 1661-1701* (Cambridge, UK, 2002); Julian Swann, *Provincial Power and Absolute Monarchy: The Estates General of Burgundy, 1661-1790* (New York, 2003); Fanny Cosandey and Robert Descimon, *L'Absolutisme en France: histoire et historiographie* (Paris, 2002). For a critical overview of some of this literature, see Beik, "The Absolutism of Louis XIV as Social Collaboration," in *Past and Present*, no. 188 (Aug. 2005): 195-224; David Parker, *Class and State in*

of the Arnoul show how the informal and highly contingent instruction of officials on the ground could impart specialized knowledge and expand state power long before the crown established fixed avenues of training and promotion for its servants. Their experience suggests that the initiative in the pre-history of bureaucracy could come not only from ministers and monarchs eager to enlarge their authority, but also from ambitious families at the kingdom's margins who anticipated their patrons' desires and fashioned themselves accordingly. In their profound commitment to embodying and applying knowledge in the naval service of the king, the Arnoul demonstrated the growing currency of technology, imperial expansion, and an "expert" persona as sources of social and professional advancement—an early case of one household's "personal identity at epistemological work" on behalf of the state.[7]

The Arnoul brothers came of age amidst an unprecedented expansion of French seapower and the administrative apparatus that serviced it. In the 1660s, fixed maritime intendancies were a recent phenomenon, part of the naval renaissance that Louis and Colbert believed necessary to challenge the seafaring economic might of

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Ancien Régime France: The Road to Modernity? (London, 1996). On the royal corps and *écoles*, see René Taton, ed., *Enseignement et diffusion des sciences en France au XVIIIe siècle* (Paris, 1964); Frederick B. Artz, *The Development of Technical Education in France, 1500-1850* (Boston, 1966); Jane Langins, *Conserving the Enlightenment: French Military Engineering from Vauban to the Revolution* (Boston, 2003); Anne Blanchard, *Les ingénieurs du Roy de Louis XIV à Louis XVI: étude du corps des fortifications* (Montpellier, 1979); Isabelle Laboulais, "Serving Science and the State: Mining Science in France, 1794-1810," *Minerva* 46, no. 1 (2008): 17-36; Terry Shinn, "Science, Tocqueville, and the State: The Organization of Knowledge in Modern France," *Social Research* 59, no. 3 (1992): 533-566. For sociological works on professionalization and its history, see Jean-François Kesler, "Le développement de la fonction publique en France," *L'Année sociologique* 28, 3e série (1977): 213-230; Howard M. Vollmer and Donald L. Mills, eds., *Professionalization* (Engelwood Cliffs, NJ, 1966); Magali S. Larson, *The Rise of the Professions: A Sociological Analysis* (Berkeley, CA, 1979), esp. 2-9; Philip Elliott, *The Sociology of the Professions* (London, 1972); Andrew Abott, *The System of Professions: An Essay on the Division of Expert Labor* (Chicago, 1988).

[7] Here I apply Steven Shapin's formulation about natural philosophers to royal administrators, whose claims to knowledge and truth were likewise mediated by social status, reputation, patronage, and comportment. Shapin, *A Social History of Truth: Civility and Science in Seventeenth-Century England* (Chicago, 1995), xxviii.

the English and the Dutch.[8] Until Colbert's reforms the day-to-day business of the navy, galleys, and colonies had been overseen only on an ad hoc basis, by private companies, individual entrepreneurs, or officers attached to a particular campaign. Beginning with Nicolas and his counterparts in France's major ports, the minister ensured that all three branches of the service were staffed exclusively and on a permanent basis by salaried officers bearing royal commissions.[9] His insistence that they develop the naval know-how necessary to meet the unique demands of their work—directing the construction and repair of ships, outfitting fleets, and managing the business of ports and colonies—distinguished these *intendants de la marine* from their fellow administrators in other parts of the kingdom.[10] Between 1661 and 1672 alone, they helped to increase the number of rated vessels in the French navy from nine to 172 and to raise the total of galleys from seven to twenty-four—a massively complex enterprise that harnessed thousands of acres of virgin oak forest, enormous quantities of money and matériel, and the collective specialized and non-specialized

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[8] Charles Cole's classic study remains the best reference for Colbert's commercial ambitions, although more recent work has emphasized the minister's pragmatic approach to policy over any coherent mercantilist design. Charles Cole, *Colbert and a Century of French Mercantilism*, 2 vols. (New York, 1939), I: 356-532, II: 1-131, 549-558; James Pritchard, *In Search of Empire: The French in the Americas, 1670-1730* (Cambridge, UK, 2004), 234-237; Alisa V. Petrovich, "Revisioning Colbert: Jean-Baptiste Colbert and the Origins of French Global Imperial Policy, 1661-1683" (PhD diss., University of Houston, 1997): 7-34. On colonial trade, emulation, and imperial rivalry in this period, including Colbert's role in them, see Sophus Reinert, *Translating Empire: Emulation and the Origins of Political Economy* (Cambridge, MA, 2011), esp. 13-72; Daniel Dessert, *La Royale: Vaisseaux et marins du Roi-Soleil* (Paris, 1996), 9-10.

[9] Dessert, *La Royale*, 9-11, 15-55; René Mémain, *La marine de guerre sous Louis XIV. Le matériel : Rochefort, arsenal modèle de Colbert* (Paris, 1937), 263-269, 361-381. As minister of Marine (1669-1683), Colbert himself would enjoy a new position designed to streamline the administration of the king's fleets, one that united many of the functions previously shared between the Grand-Maître de la Navigation and individual admirals. Michel Vergé-Franceschi, *La Marine française au XVIIIe siècle: Guerres, administration, exploration* (Paris, 1996), 33-43, 203-215.

[10] Claude Aboucaya, *Les intendants de la marine sous l'ancien régime: contribution à l'étude du département, du port et arsenal de la marine de Toulon* (Marseille, 1958), 21-25; Mémain, *La marine de guerre*, 263-283, 367-371.

manpower of all the major ports.[11] Given the scale of this effort, it is no accident that royal shipyards, and those who staffed them, were at the leading edge of developments in state expertise.

As an administrative dynasty founded upon service in the king's fleets, ports, and colonies, the Arnoul were precocious and extraordinarily successful, but their experience was not exactly unique. Indeed, nearly every colonial governor and intendant in this period was, like the Arnoul men, a product of training in the navy, the army, or the Parisian courts. Their administrative practices and personas were forged in the crucible of those institutions. While the colonies posed unprecedented problems of governance, the formative experience of managing paperwork, personnel, and the idiosyncracies of fleets and ports began along metropolitan shores. I start with the Arnoul, then, in order to provide a common backdrop for the chapters that follow. In Marseille, Toulon, and beyond, the Arnoul learned to cope with unfamiliar peoples and problems on a scale unprecedented for royal servants. Their experience directly informed policies, regulations, and ordinances that would shape administrative culture within the king's maritime services for decades to come. To understand the intellectual and institutional baggage that conditioned the *science* of governance in the New World, I propose, we should begin by looking at careers like theirs.

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[11] Pritchard, *In Search of Empire*, 293; Dessert, *La Royale*, 15-16, 61-137; Paul Bamford, *Fighting Ships and Prisons: The Mediterranean Galleys of France in the Age of Louis XIV* (Minneapolis, 1973), 24; Biography of Nicolas Arnoul, BnF NAF 21416, fols. 1-2v (ca. 1715). To cite one example, the *Royal Louis*, flagship of the Mediterranean fleet in the 1670s and 1680s, required 47,780ft^2 of Burgundian and Provençal oak to build, in addition to vast amounts of other raw and finished materials. Guillaume Hayet, *Description du vaisseau "le Royal Louis", dédiée à messire Pierre Arnoul...* (Marseille, 1677), 10. In 1660 the crown spent approximately 300,000 pounds on its navy, whereas in 1670 it spent 13,400,000; during the intervening decade the average annual budget for the navy was 10,000,000 *livres*. Cole, *Colbert and a Century*, I: 451-452.

Learning the Cordages*: Pierre Arnoul and the Galleys*

The apprenticeships of Pierre and Nicolas-François fit within a long-term pattern of strategic self-fashioning that had already marked their father's career. Nicolas was descended on both sides from several generations of royal servants, based in Paris and Picardie, that included military officers, king's councillors, tax receivers, and secretaries of the royal household.[12] As a young man he learned to ride at an academy with the aim of becoming a soldier, but his older brother, an aide (*commis*) to Minister of War Sublet de Noyers, instead sought to place him in Noyers' service.[13] At first meeting Nicolas the minister balked,

> not believing that this young man could ever apply himself nor discipline himself sufficiently for a position of this kind [*commis*], because he saw that his inclination was for arms and that he always dressed in extraordinary finery—in contrast to which Monsieur de Noyers was a very simple and extremely modest man; [Noyers] said that he was very doubtful that their dispositions were compatible and that it would be better to leave [Nicolas] on the path he had already taken.

At his brother's insistence, Nicolas abandoned "all his fripperies and the worldly air that he had" and "presented himself to Monsieur de Noyers as if he were entering into a seminary, which made Monsieur de Noyers receive him all the more agreeably for having seen this young man show the strength to overcome his inclination and his

[12] Among these forebears were a *trésorier des cent gentilhommes de la maison du Roi*, a cavalry lieutenant, a *sécretaire du Roi*, and a controller of the queen's household, on his father's side, and a *conseiller du Roi* and a *receveur des tailles et des aides* at Mans on the side of his mother, Marguerite Taron, daughter of a rich Picard family. Gaston Rambert, *Nicolas Arnoul, Intendant des Galères à Marseille (1665-1674)* (Marseille, 1931), 9-10; Biography of Nicolas Arnoul, BnF NAF 21416, fol. 1.

[13] It is unclear why Nicolas's brother, rather than his father, took charge of his career. Most likely his father was deceased by this time. If so, his experience would anticipate that of his younger sons, who advanced in the world largely thanks to Pierre's efforts.

temperament."[14] It was this sudden, radical transformation from a worldly soldier-dandy into a monkish secretary that proved Nicolas's ability to "discipline himself [*s'assujetir*]," launching his career as a *commis* at Noyers' side, a fortification-builder and military supplier in Picardie, an ambassador and spy under Richelieu, and a commissioner-general of the navy at Toulon.[15] After the Cardinal's death he retired from public life to pursue his fortune, only to return two decades later following a bankruptcy and the timely intervention of Colbert. Thus, when Nicolas began grooming Pierre as his successor in 1665, he was already engaged in a familiar task, reinventing himself to please a powerful patron.[16]

As a fortification-builder Nicolas had already discovered one niche of service in which the crown desperately sought to cultivate and reward home-grown expertise; in the galleys he found another.[17] At the time of his appointment to Marseille, the royal slave ships were an ideal place to rebuild a lost fortune and elevate a family's prospects. Louis and Colbert were committed to building a fleet to rival those of

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[14] BnF NAF 21416, fol. 1. On Noyer's famously austere disposition and approach to his work, see Orest Ranum, *Richelieu and the Councillors of Louis XIII: A Study of the Secretaries of State and Superintendants of Finance in the Ministry of Richelieu, 1635-1642* (Oxford, UK, 1963), 100-120.

[15] Rambert, *Nicolas Arnoul*, 10-13. Nicolas's biography claimed that Richelieu wished him to spy on Louis XIII, but that Nicolas refused, explaining honorably that he could not serve two masters. Later the Cardinal planned to give Arnoul a post as *intendant des Finances*, but delays forced him to appoint Séraphin de Mauroy instead. After Richelieu's death and Noyers's retirement, Nicolas believed he would succeed Noyers as Minister of State for War, but was passed over in favor of Michel Le Tellier. BnF NAF 21416, fols. 1-1v; Rambert, *Nicolas Arnoul*, 16.

[16] Daniel Dessert and Louis Journet suggest that Nicolas sought Colbert's patronage in order to rebuild his fortune as a tax farmer. Dessert and Journet, "Le lobby Colbert," 1334n40. Sharon Kettering agreed, adding that the minister's protection was probably secured by one of Nicolas's friends, François Berthelot, a military supplier, financier, and Colbert client. Kettering, *Patrons, Brokers, and Clients*, 200. The family's anonymous biographer told a different story, claiming that Nicolas had been the first to hire Colbert into royal service and that the minister therefore appointed him out of friendship and obligation: "M. Colbert estoit deslors entré dans le ministere et comme il estoit amy particulier de m. arnoul qui luy avoit donné le premier employ qu'il eut jamais eu le fit rendre pour scavoir s'il voudroit de nouveau s'attacher a la marine dans le dessein ou il estoit de la relever, et M. arnoul l'ayant accepté il fut fait intendant des Galeres en l'année 1665." BnF NAF 21416, fol. 2.

[17] On the monarchy's efforts to harness the practical knowledge produced by military engineers during the Wars of Religion and the Thirty Years' War, see Langins, *Conserving the Enlightenment*, 39-41.

Spain, the Ottoman Sultan, and the Italian states. Beyond providing a nimble form of coastal defense, galleys held immense symbolic value to a young king eager to punish Muslim insults and establish himself as a Christian warrior-monarch in the crusading tradition. Over the next twenty years he would invest tremendous sums of money and manpower to replace his six "old hunks of galleys" with the largest fleet in Europe.[18] Elite families saw an opportunity and clamored to place their sons among the Knights of Saint John, whose ranks produced around half of France's galley officer corps in these years.[19] In 1666 Henri d'Oppède, President of the Parlement of Aix and a powerful ally of the Arnoul, endorsed the trend by obtaining captaincies for his brother and a cousin.[20] Nicolas envisioned the same future for his youngest son, Nicolas-François, whom he placed in the Order two years later.[21] No less concerned with rebuilding his fortune, meanwhile, he used his position as intendant to secure lucrative supply contracts, pay off his creditors, and amass an estate that would ultimately encompass 300,000 pounds, two fiefs near Paris and Avignon, and profitable lands adjoining the arsenal of Marseille.[22]

Nicolas used both money and influence to reorient his son's education toward the needs of the service. He hired a governor to complete Pierre's study of belles

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[18] Cole, *Colbert and a Century*, I: 451.

[19] Bamford, *Fighting Ships and Prisons*, 97-101.

[20] Kettering, *Patrons, Brokers, and Clients*, 54. Oppède's portrait would accompany Pierre to Rochefort and Toulon. "Estat de mes meubles venûes de Toulon qui doivent se trouver encore a Carpentras et a Baume," BnF NAF 21417, fol. 260 (Oct. 2, 1699).

[21] Decision of Nicolas Cotoner, Master of the Hospital of Saint John of Jerusalem and of the Military Order of Saint Sepulchre, regarding the request of Nicolas Arnoul and Genevieve Saulger, BnF NAF 21416, fols. 231-232v (Jan. 19, 1668).

[22] In 1669 Nicolas bought a collection of lands known as *le Marquisat*, located along the port's Rive-Neuve, for 15,600 *livres*. Then, in 1671-1672, he spent 74,689 *livres* to build lodgings and magazines on those lands that brought a substantial return which, by 1710, was earning Pierre 11,130 *livres* per year. Pierre Masson, *Les galères de France (1481-1781): Marseille, port de guerre* (Paris, 1938), 367n1; Kettering, *Patrons, Brokers, and Clients*, 200-201; Rambert, *Nicolas Arnoul*, 33-44.

lettres, provided him lessons in geometry and trigonometry with a mathematician loaned to him by the general of the galleys, and ensured that he learned the "science of fortifications" under a Monsieur de Combe, reputedly "the finest engineer of his time, much more profound than [Commissioner-General of Fortifications] Monsieur de vauban."[23] Instead of pursuing the advanced rhetoric and philosophy that would have occupied his final years at *collège* (and advanced his career in the priesthood), Pierre developed a mind for figures and angles. He applied himself to his lessons, he later declared, "with so much devotion that he had his meals brought to him and placed at the edge of the table where he labored, without leaving his work, the usual amount of study time not being enough for him."[24] If his masters were as gifted and his dedication as constant as he and his biographer claimed, he would have received as good or better an education in these subjects as the highest-ranking military officers of his day.[25]

Unlike those officers and perhaps every other young nobleman in France, however, Pierre's instruction also included a crash course in a subject normally foreign to young nobles: carpentry.[26] In 1668 Colbert responded to a proposal from Arnoul:

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[23] "Memoire sur la vie et sur les services de M. Arnoul a present intendant des galeres et du commerce," BnF NAF 21416, fol. 117 (ca. 1715). Pierre's autobiographical notes are more modest about Combe's reputation, referring to him only as "un des plus grands ingenieurs de son temps." Autobiographical notes of Pierre Arnoul, BnF NAF 21416, fol. 23 (ca. 1715).

[24] "Memoire sur la vie et sur les services de M. Arnoul a present intendant des galeres et du commerce," BnF NAF 21416, fol. 117.

[25] On the education of élite sword nobles destined for officers' commissions, see Motley, *Becoming a French Aristocrat*, 68-70.

[26] In dictionaries of the period, carpentry is not mentioned among the undignified *métiers* associated with derogation, but *menuiserie*, a closely-related occupation, was sometimes judged *dérogeant*. J.-B. Dumoulin, *Lettres de noblesse accordées aux artistes français (XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles)* (Paris, 1873), 3. Derogation was an ambiguous and flexible concept, both juridically and socially, and one way in which an otherwise derogative activity could become more dignified was to be attached to warfare or

> It is good to apply your son to everything that could concern the service or anything that depends upon the service of the galleys. If he undertakes under your supervision and the guidance of [master carpenter Pierre] Hubac to make himself a carpenter [*se rendre Charpentier*], I am convinced that he will become one very soon, and that he will know perfectly all the pieces of wood that enter into the construction of a galley and the method of assembling them.[27]

The minister, who was eager to end French dependence on foreign shipbuilders by training homegrown experts, implied that instruction in naval carpentry should form part of a broader familiarity with all aspects of the service; in the absence of written manuals, that instruction would have to come directly from a master carpenter.[28] The guiding presence of Hubac, a specialist in galley construction and the son of Brest's renowned master shipbuilder, Laurent Hubac, would ensure that Pierre received the best teaching available.[29] In the end Pierre dutifully spent 18 months as Hubac's "disciple," learning the technical side of shipbuilding while overseeing the construction of two galleys and a galeasse commissioned by the king.[30]

Pierre needed to be familiar with the building of ships because, if he were promoted to an intendancy, he would be responsible for initiating the construction

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the manufacture of arms (as in the case of metallurgy). Thus the construction of ships for the king's fleet likely would have been considered more dignified than other, similar works of carpentry. On derogation and its causes, see Laurent Bourquin, *La noblesse de la France moderne (XVIe au XVIIIe siècles)* (Paris, 2002), 15-18.

[27] Colbert to N. Arnoul, BnF NAF 21308, fols. 147v-148 (August 3, 1668).

[28] Cole, *Colbert and a Century*, I: 454-457; Dessert, *La Royale*, 91. The first guide to naval architecture would not appear until 1677, and it was more of a manual to the elements of a ship than a description of how they could be assembled in phases according to mathematical principles. The first "true manual of construction" written by a "veritable technician" was a 1683 manuscript penned by the Toulonnais carpenter, François I Coulomb. Dessert, *La Royale*, 123.

[29] Dessert, *La Royale*, 83.

[30] "Memoire sur la vie et sur les services de M. Arnoul a present intendant des galeres et du commerce," BnF NAF 21416, fol. 117; Autobiographical notes of Pierre Arnoul, BnF NAF 21416, fols. 23-23v. For Pierre's orders to build and design the galeasse and galleys, see Colbert to N. Arnoul, BnF NAF 21308, fol. 395v (Mar. 23, 1668); Colbert to N. Arnoul, fol. 86 (May 18, 1668); N. Arnoul to Colbert, fol. 123v (Jul. 7, 1668).

process and ensuring that it was carried out according to the king's financial interests (i.e., as cheaply as possible). Typically, when an intendant received orders to build a vessel, he would seek out a master carpenter to request a detailed estimate of the work. The carpenter's proposal would include the proportions of the ship he planned to build (carefully chosen since these would determine its performance on the water) and occasionally the qualities of the wood required. It also would propose an itemized estimate of the cost. Work on the vessel would not begin until the intendant had approved the proposal.[31] There was a great deal of room for negotiation in this process, since the intendant could withhold his approval, holding out for a lower estimate or, if he were knowledgeable and assertive enough, for certain principles of design.[32] Throughout, he needed to know how to discuss the specifics with the carpenter and, no less important, how to explain them to the minister.

Seventeenth-century ships were products of imagination, improvisation, and practical know-how, and in learning how to build them Pierre likely relied as much on the cognitive tools bestowed by his collegiate education as any formal principles of mathematics or engineering.[33] Visualization, contemplation, and note-taking were firmly intertwined in Jesuit pedagogy and devotional practice. The order encouraged its members to record their visions of the divine as a spiritual exercise and an aid to future meditation. Similarly, Jesuits *collégiens* were taught to use notebooks as "short-term memory aids" designed to accelerate their appropriation of course

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[31] Dessert, *La Royale*, 123-124.

[32] This working relationship could be difficult regardless of the intendant's leverage. Simon Chabert, proud of his family's three centuries of shipbuilding experience, was "very able, but hard to manage and to chasten," according to Pierre. Masson, *Les galères de France*, 388.

[33] See the paragraph and citations below. The same was true of fortifications, whose construction in this period, despite requiring advanced mathematics, was more an art than a science. Langins, *Conserving the Enlightenment*, 39-62.

material.[34] Pierre's ability to internalize and creatively re-formulate his lessons had ranked him among the best in his class at Clermont (alongside Colbert's son and successor, the Marquis de Seignelay), and his talent for rendering conceptual imagery into verse and prose had won him prizes from his instructors.[35] The lessons stuck: for the rest of his life he would continue to write poetry, much of it consisting of odes to Louis XIV or descriptive first-person "portraits" of devotional subjects such as Jesus, the nativity, a soul in Purgatory, and a converted sinner.[36] This facility for turning mental images into recorded observations—whether poetic, epistolary, or administrative—is what allowed Jesuit missionaries to "order and codify" their experience of new worlds into "objects of knowledge."[37] Pierre, having learned their techniques, was equipped to do the same for the unfamiliar world of the shipyard.

The details of Pierre's apprenticeship to Hubac are unknown, but later events would demonstrate his appropriation of these lessons and their importance to his reputation and career. In 1677, two years after his appointment as intendant at Toulon, he was hailed by one of his subordinates in a published description of the *Royal Louis* (b. 1666-1670), then the flagship of the Mediterranean fleet and a vessel built under Pierre's indirect supervision. In an epigraph preceding his dedication to

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[34] Paul Nelles, "Seeing and Writing: The Art of Observation in the Early Jesuit Missions," *Intellectual History Review* 20, no. 3 (2010): 317-333. For more on the education of *gens de robe* and life in the *collèges*, see L. W. B. Brockliss, *French Higher Education in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries: A Cultural History* (New York, 1987).

[35] "M. Arnoul a esté elevé chez les jesuites au college de Clermont depuis la sixieme jusqu'a la fin de seconde. Il estoit toujours des premiers dans ses classes et a toujours eu des prix a la fin de chacune, de prose, de poesie ou de memoire. Il estoit aussy de toutes les declamations avec M. le Marquis de Seignelay qui estoit dans le meme temps que luy au college, et de la meme classe, et comme il y avoit une espece d'emulation entr'eux deux, on pretend que M. Colbert le donnoit souvent pour exemple a M. son fils." "Memoire sur la vie et sur les services de M. Arnoul a present intendant des galeres et du commerce," BnF NAF 21416, fol. 117.

[36] Pierre's poems are undated, but internal evidence suggests that they were written across several decades. The devotional pieces are in BnF NAF 21400, fols. 127-142.

[37] Nelles, "Seeing and Writing": 327-333.

Arnoul, the author imagined that the ship, "having been built by so great a man / Will cut down the vast enemies of the French / So that such a glorious ruler of the seas, Arnoul, watching over them / Is known to all who meet him."[38] The following year Colbert ordered Pierre to prepare with meticulous precision all of the pieces of a 30-gun vessel so that he could "undertake to build, or more precisely, to assemble in its entirety" a spectacular "chef-d'oeuvre" over three or four days in case Louis were ever to visit Toulon.[39] Some months later, Pierre earned kingdom-wide publicity for overseeing the construction of a 103' ship in under seven hours. France's official gazette wondered at the feat, which involved 700 workers, forty port holes, and 2,000 pieces of rigging.[40]

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[38] As the commissioner's dedication made clear, the ship was not built under Pierre's direct supervision (at the time he was in Marseille, overseeing the construction of a galeasse and two galleys of his own design), but rather under the direction of the carpenter Rodolphe Gédéon and the Marquis d'Infreville, then a *commandant du navire* of the Mediterranean fleet. I am grateful to Nathan Daniels for help with the Latin translation. Hayet, *Description du vaisseau "le Royal Louis"*, front matter; Dessert, *La Royale*, 324. Edmund Dummer, a future Surveyor of the Royal Navy, toured the *Royal Louis* during his visit to Toulon in 1683 and found it wanting: "[She is] a great ship and glorious in her first carving, no doubt; but to my judgment not of good proportion, nor good workmanship, her figure under water I know not, nor is that above to be admired." Quoted in Celina Fox, "The Ingenious Mr Dummer: Rationalizing the Royal Navy in Late Seventeenth-Century England," *Electronic British Library Journal* (2007): 17, www.bl.uk/eblj/2007articles/pdf/ebljarticle102007.pdf.

[39] Colbert to P. Arnoul (Aug. 3, 1678), reproduced in Pierre Clément, ed., *Lettres, instructions et mémoires de Colbert*, 7 vols. (Paris, 1861-1882), III[1]: 115-117. By comparison, the minister had once asked Nicolas to be ready to build a light galley in fewer than twenty-four hours; when he asked another intendant to do the same for a ship-of-the-line, the official protested that he would need more than a week. Colbert to N. Arnoul (Oct. 17, 1670), reproduced in Clément, *Lettres*, 299 and 299n1.

[40] *La Gazette* (Jul. 29, 1679), quoted in Clément, *Lettres*, 299-300n1; see also Archives nationales [AN], Fonds Marine B[3] 32, fols. 389-393, cited in Dessert, *La Royale*, 157. The *Gazette*'s report of a similar stunt in Marseille some months later describes the ordered pageantry involved in these staged constructions: "Le sieur Brodart, intendant des galères à Marseille, y a fait bâtir une galère dans l'espace de dix heures et demie. Le marquis de Seignelay, sécretaire d'État, étant arrivé à l'arsenal à six heures du matin, à peine y fut-il entré que le sieur Brodart fit paraître d'un coup de sifflet huit cents ouvriers qui commencèrent à batir une galère. Ils étaient de plusieurs métiers, tous distingués par leurs habits différents, afin qu'ils pussent se reconnaître en travaillant, et qu'il n'y eût pas de confusion. Ils commencèrent à travailler à six heures et demie du matin et, à cinq heures du soir, la galère étant achevée et équipée, le maréchal duc de Vivonne, le marquis de Seignelay et le chevalier de Noailles, lieutenant général des galères, montèrent dessus et allèrent jusqu'au Château-d'If." *La Gazette* (Nov. 11, 1679), quoted in Masson, *Les galères de France*, 188-189. The Musée national de la Marine's online exhibtion, "La construction navale en bois aux XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles," gives a sense of the

Pierre's apprenticeship taught him the skills necessary not only to oversee naval constructions, but also to perform the mundane work of maritime administration. He watched up close as Nicolas organized the outfitting and debarkation of ships, asserted royal prerogatives to police and expand the port, and handled the acquisition and care of several thousand convicts and slaves to row the galleys, all while maintaining a web of correspondence that stetched across France and the Mediterranean.[41] The intendant's daily duties involved a series of face-to-face encounters punctuated by intensive paperwork. A steady stream of merchants, craftsmen, naval officers, municipal officials, foreign dignitaries, and subjects-in-need called at his residence, the *Maison du Roi*, while the business of the port frequently took him and his small team of commissioners (*commissaires*) and scribes (*ecrivains*) out to the shipyard and into its workshops.[42] In the course of inspecting the magazines, the galleys, and other sites around Marseille's burgeoning arsenal, his team produced documents that translated what he saw and heard into recorded observations for his and Colbert's reference. Performing these tasks well demanded more than a wide-ranging grasp of naval construction, accounting, and the law; they also required a degree of self-assertion over master craftsmen and ship's officers that could only be achieved to the extent that he could discuss intelligently the issues

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enormous scale and difficulty involved in designing and building a ship at this time: www.musee-marine.fr/programmes_multimedia/construction_navale/ (accessed Feb. 26, 2013).

[41] The following composite account of the Arnouls' daily activities draws upon the correspondance between Nicolas and Colbert conserved in the Arnoul papers and in sub-series B^2 6 of the AN's Fonds Marine. Zysberg's *Les galériens* and Dessert's *La Royale* likewise provide useful information about the routine work involved in administering the galleys.

[42] Some of the Arnouls' more eminent callers stayed to dine as guests; their identities are listed in the family's daily table expenses. "Comptes de dépenses tenus par Tournay secrétaire de l'intendant des galères," Archives Départementales des Bouches-du-Rhône, 5E 17 (1674-1675).

relevant to their labors.[43] His work demanded, in other words, both a multitude of *connaissances* and the ability to deploy them credibly with a range of people across a variety of settings.

Nicolas gradually phased Pierre into this work while informing Colbert of the boy's progress. In addition to supervising the construction of ships, Pierre served as his father's copyist and part-time secretary, and he was left in charge whenever Nicolas was called from town.[44] In doing so he became directly familiar with the routines and conventions of administering the port.[45] According to Nicolas, Pierre proved "conscientious" during his father's absences and "likes the work, not being at all idle."[46] Only three years after bringing his son to Marseille, he reported proudly that Pierre was mastering the various demands of the intendancy:

> My son is working at everything under me for the sake of his instruction. [I am] seeking to make of him a *bon marin sur terre*, and I dare say paternally that he is not doing a bad job of it; rather he is enjoying it and applying himself entirely to the economy of the galleys, which he now knows. The vessels whose construction you are pleased to assign me will show him the rest. I

[43] These insights draw upon René Mémain's study of the intendancy of Rochefort in this period. Mémain, *La marine de guerre*, 370.

[44] N. Arnoul to Colbert, BnF NAF 21306, fol. 296v (Jan. 16, 1666); N. Arnoul to Colbert, BnF NAF 21306, fol. 324 (Feb. 6, 1666). For passing mention of Pierre's roles as copyist and secretary, see Autobiographical notes, BnF NAF 21416, fol. 23v; "cest [mon fils] qui ecrit les lettres que j'ay l'honneur de vous mander," N. Arnoul to Colbert, BnF NAF 21307, fol. 77v (Mar. 12, 1667).

[45] Pierre also would have seen how his father, as the administrator of a new and expanding service, attempted to resolve problems of information mobility and overload. For example, Nicolas tried to replace bulky convict registers with a system of blank playing cards on which the name of every *forçat* in each chain gang was inscribed, which he hoped would allow galley captains to trade crews efficiently and without losing track of which convicts were working under them. The experiment failed when the captains repeatedly lost their cards. Zysberg, *Les galériens*, 46-47.

[46] "Mon fils fait icy pour moy en mon absence et par la raison que c'est mon fils je n'auserois dire qu'il fait bien. Je vous diré seulement qu'il est soigneux ayme le travail n'estant pas evanté vous me pardonnerez aisement vous este pere." N. Arnoul to Colbert, BnF NAF 21306, fol. 296v (Jan. 16, 1666).

> will have him oversee [the work] under the master [carpenter], since he has [already] overseen a galley.[47]

Knowledge of shipbuilding remained Pierre's most distinctive selling point as a client, Nicolas suggested, but it was his ability to perform well at "everything" that would demonstrate his readiness for a post of his own.[48]

To further encourage and justify Colbert's protection, the Arnoul gave regular proofs of Pierre's progress that demonstrated both the breadth of his learning and his embrace of a value cherished by the minister: thrift. His first "project" was a proposal to rationalize the distribution of funds within the galleys. Nicolas claimed that Pierre's reorganization of accounts would be more than an abstract exercise: "when the book that I am having my son write, covering all that concerns the galleys, is complete, I hope that His Majesty and you, from your study [*cabinet*], can prevent [even] the greatest scoundrel from robbing 2,000 *escus* from the galleys or from paying them out without our seeing it."[49] The book would not only show that his son "knows" the "economy of the galleys," it would also serve as a practical tool of governance, allowing the king to keep better track of his pennies.[50] The minister's

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[47] N. Arnoul to Colbert, BnF NAF 21307, fols. 464v-465 (Mar. 19, 1669).

[48] Nicolas had incentive to make a favorable impression of his son's progress to Colbert—already Nicolas was seeking an appointment for him, as captain of the arsenal—but as a client he also risked his credit and perhaps his position if he misled the minister about Pierre's abilities, a fact of which Colbert had taken care to remind him. N.Arnoul to Colbert, BnF NAF 21308, fol. 212v (Sep. 11, 1668); Colbert to N. Arnoul, BnF NAF 21308, fol. 256 (Sep. 21, 1668); Colbert to N. Arnoul, BnF NAF 21306, fol. 472 (Sep. 17, 1666).

[49] "Je vous renvoye le memoire des apostilz de l'estat respondu, et quand le livre que je faicts faire par mon fils de tout ce qui concerne les galeres sera achevé j'espere que S. M. et vous de vostre cabinet vous pourez empescher le plus grand fripon de derober 2000 escus sur toutes le galeres ny les doner a gagner sans qu'on le voye on dit que je gaste le metier." N. Arnoul to Colbert, BnF NAF 21307, fol. 52v (Feb. 12, 1667).

[50] N. Arnoul to Colbert, BnF NAF 21308, fols. 464v-465 (Mar. 19, 1669); N. Arnoul to Colbert, BnF NAF 21307, fol. 52v (Feb. 12, 1667); "il aura l'honneur de vous pn'ter son livre quand il y aura mis la dernier main pour eschantillon de son caprice," N. Arnoul to Colbert, BnF NAF 21307, fols. 77-77v (Mar. 12, 1667).

enthusiastic response suggests that he recognized its value.[51] Pierre's subsequent projects included a treatise on the construction and arming of a galley, which he dedicated to Colbert, and the design of the grand staircase of the hospital of Marseille, which he claimed to achieve without any previous architectural training.[52] In providing such "demonstrations of his intellect [*echantillons de son caprice*]," he displayed a precocious grip of administrative style, a capacity for both logical and creative thinking, and a knack for grabbing his patron's attention—qualities that rapidly earned him favor from a minister whose obsessive information-gathering and exacting standards of performance were already well known.

Crucially, Pierre was able to demonstrate his technical knowledge not only on paper, but also in face-to-face encounters with his superiors. In 1667 Colbert sent him away from his father's side for the first time to oversee fortification works elsewhere in Provence. Nicolas prepared his son for the task by giving him model bills of payment to contractors, dispatching an experienced treasurer to offer help and advice, and laying out meticulous orders that included how to produce durable masonry, where and when to pay laborers, and a reminder to keep his daily account book in his study.[53] Despite these precautions, Pierre floundered when local authorities mocked his youth (he was then fifteen) and refused to follow his orders; when the minister called him to Court to explain himself, however, he so impressed

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[51] Colbert was so enthusiastic about the proposal, sight unseen, that he immediately asked for Pierre's age and height as well as an assessment of his constitution and fitness for service. Colbert to N. Arnoul, BnF NAF, fols. 62v-63 (Feb. 25, 1667); Autobiographical notes, fol. 23v.

[52] "Memoire sur la vie et sur les services de M. Arnoul a present intendant des galeres et du commerce," BnF NAF 21416, fol. 117; Autobiographical notes, BnF NAF 21416, fols. 23-23v. Pierre's treatise has not survived among the family's papers in Paris or Marseille.

[53] N. Arnoul, "Ordres qui seront observées a la conduite de la fortification de Pignerol par les Srs. Arnoul et du Cayron que le Roy a choisy pour la conduite des travaux des fortiffications de cette place," BnF NAF 21307, fols. 106-107v (Apr. 12, 1667).

Colbert and Minister of War Louvois that they granted him two audiences with the king, the first an hour-long interview in Louis's *cabinet* to discuss plans for a proposed fort (drawn up in relief by Pierre himself), and the second to present the king with a model of the Arsenal of Marseille "in the presence of the entire Court."[54] Afterward Louis, Colbert, and other leading ministers all praised his maturity and intelligence.[55] Pierre's first foray into public life had been a failure, but in the presence of his patrons he was able to perform his budding expertise well enough to regain their confidence and "enter the world" as an intendant-in-waiting.[56]

Pierre's ascenscion rested in good part on his ability to distinguish himself as a hybrid administrator-craftsman who could satisfy in concrete ways the emulative

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[54] Within three months of Pierre's arrival at Pignerol, the site of these fortifications, the minister ordered Nicolas to visit the works in person to put them back on a stable footing. Colbert to N. Arnoul, BnF NAF 21307, fols. 148-148v (Jul 4, 1667). Colbert was unhappy with the plaintive appeals he received from Pierre, but softened his criticism to account for the boy's youth: "Je vous avouë que j'ay esté surpris & un peu scandalisé de voir le billet (cy joinct) escrit de la main de vre filz et conçeu dans les termes qu'il est. Tout ce que l'on peut alleguer pour l'en excuser en quelque façon est que c'est encore un jeune garçon, Mais a la verité ce stile n'est pas propre pour une personne qui doit avoir l'Inspection et la conduite sur plusieurs autres." Colbert to N. Arnoul, BnF NAF 21307, fols. 157-157v (Sep. 21, 1667). Pierre traveled to Court with orders to present sketches of the galleys, a model of the proposed Arsenal of Marseille, several interesting rocks and beads, and two "turcs levantin" destined to serve as models for the Academie Royale de Peinture; he was also ordered to give Colbert a full account of affairs under his father's charge, including the works at Pignerol. He was accompanied on his visit by the famous Genoese sculptor and architect, Pierre Puget, then serving as an advisor to Nicolas on the construction of the Marseille arsenal, who was far less warmly received by the minister. Colbert to N. Arnoul, BnF NAF 21307, fol. 273v (Dec. 30, 1667); fol. 313v (Jan. 2, 1668); fol. 364v (Feb. 17, 1668); Masson, *Les galères de France*, 177. On the audiences Pierre received, see Autobiographical notes, BnF NAF 21416, fols. 23v-24 and "Memoire sur la vie et sur les services de M. Arnoul a present intendant des galeres et du commerce," fols. 117-117v.

[55] The king expressed "all the more satisfaction [with him] because he did not seem to be more than 17 or 18 years old"; Colbert wrote Nicolas that Pierre "is well made...wise and moderate"; and the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Hugues de Lionne, judged him "very well made and sharp witted," adding that he would be happy to render the boy some service in future. Colbert to N. Arnoul, BnF NAF 21307, fol. 370 (Feb. 23, 1668); Lionne to N. Arnoul, BnF NAF 21308, fol. 8 (Apr. 8, 1668).

[56] Mark Motley has defined "entering the world" as the moment when young nobles crossed the threshold from household care and instruction to maturity, formal service, and an individual identity at Court—a moment of passage often marked by a public test and triumph. Motley, *Becoming a French Aristocrat*, 169-203.

impulse that underpinned French naval and commercial policy during these years.[57] Upon returning from Court in May 1668 he oversaw the construction of a galeasse and two galleys of his own design, honed his draftsmanship, negotiated the purchase of slaves at Livorno, and sailed the coast of Provence aboard the fleet.[58] These feats prepared him, in the minds of Nicolas and Colbert, for intelligence-gathering missions to Italy, Holland, and England.[59] Tours of Europe were common among sons of the high nobility, but Pierre's travels were unique in that he received strict orders from Colbert to use his advanced training in navigation, fortifications, construction, machinery, and drafting to produce detailed memoranda about anything that might give France's navy and galleys an edge over their competitors.[60] In the

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[57] As Sophus Reinert has noted, military and commercial policy were closely linked in Colbert's mind, since he perceived finances to be the lifeblood of Louis's war efforts. His desire to mimic the best attributes of the Italian, Dutch, and English fleets reflected a broader pattern of competitive emulation that characterized the political economies of early modern European empires. See Reinert, *Translating Empire*, esp. 17; Cole, *Colbert and a Century*, I: 450, II: 1-32.

[58] Colbert to N. Arnoul, BnF NAF 21308, fol. 395v (Mar. 23, 1668); Colbert to N. Arnoul, fol. 86 (May 18, 1668); N. Arnoul to Colbert, fol. 123v (Jul. 7, 1668); N. Arnoul to Colbert, fols. 464v-465 (Mar. 19, 1669). Pierre had already been tasked with drawing for his father, who claimed to have neither the patience nor the talent for it himself. N. Arnoul to Colbert, BnF NAF 21308, fols. 464v-465 (Mar. 19, 1669); N. Arnoul to Colbert, fol. 197v (Sep. 11, 1668).

[59] Details about Pierre's voyages are scattered across the correspondence of his father and Colbert as well as Pierre's autobiographical notes. Some of the relevant sources are listed here: Colbert to N. Arnoul, BnF NAF 21309, fols. 31-32v, 34v (May 10, 1669); Colbert to N. Arnoul, fols. 62v-63 (May 31, 1669); Colbert to N. Arnoul, fols. 122-122v (Jul. 12, 1669); N. Arnoul to Colbert, fols. 143-143v (Jul. 27, 1669); Colbert to N. Arnoul, fol. 156v (Aug. 9, 1669); Colbert to N. Arnoul, fol. 228v (Oct. 11, 1669); Colbert to N. Arnoul, fol. 248v (Oct. 25, 1669); N. Arnoul to Colbert, fols. 289-290 (Nov. 16, 1669); Colbert to N. Arnoul, fol. 306 (Nov. 29, 1669); Colbert to N. Arnoul (Aug. 16, 1669), reproduced in Clément, *Lettres de Colbert*, III[1]: 153; Colbert to N. Arnoul (Oct. 24, 1670), in Clément, *Lettres de Colbert*, III[1]: 302; Colbert to N. Arnoul (May 1, 1671), in Clément, *Lettres de Colbert*, III[1]: 363; Autobiographical notes, BnF NAF 21416, fols. 24v-25v; "Memoire sur la vie et sur les services de M. Arnoul a present intendant des galeres et du commerce," fol. 117v.

[60] Although Pierre was accompanied by a draftsman and a carpenter, Colbert insisted that he make his own observations: "Prenez bien garde, pendant le séjour que vous faites à présent en Hollande, d'observer avec grand soin tous les ouvrages qui se font en ce pays-là pour l'avantage et la facilité de leur navigation, de prendre des dessins de toutes les machines dont ils se servent pour vider leurs ports, pour la construction de leurs vaisseaux et généralement pour tout ce qui nous peut estre utile aux travaux que nous entreprenons. Surtout ne vous contentez pas de la superficie comme la plupart des jeunes gens; mais approfondissez les matières et faites un journal exact de tout ce que vous verrez un peu extraordinaire jour par jour." Colbert to P. Arnoul (Oct. 24, 1670), excerpted in Clément, *Lettres de Colbert*, III[1]: 302n2. The carpenter was imprisoned in Venice on suspicion of espionage. Colbert

event, each of his reports was more exhaustive and incisive than the last.[61] At Pierre's urging, Colbert ordered that the Italian method of choosing, preserving, and drying wood be adopted immediately; several years later, Pierre would draw on his experience in Holland to import a labor-saving device, the sawmill, to France.[62] His recommendations reflected an increasing ability to see the work of shipbuilding from a carpenter's perspective.[63] Reportedly, Colbert was so pleased with Pierre's memoranda that he "made it a pleasure and a study to have each chapter produced by [Pierre] read to him the same day it was written, during the evening time when he relaxed with his children." He also made them required reading for Seignelay before the Marquis's own journeys abroad, then filed them away in his personal library. The

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to N. Arnoul, BnF NAF 21309, fol. 131v (Jul. 19, 1669); N. Arnoul to Colbert, fols. 143-143v (Jul. 27, 1669); "Memoire sur la vie et sur les services de M. Arnoul a present intendant des galeres et du commerce," BnF NAF 21416, fol. 117v. Nicolas again offered instructions and advice, this time drawing on his diplomatic background to educate his son about the identities of England's most important royal and naval officers, the structure of its nobility, and the necessity of holding his tongue when the English styled their king "Roy de France." "Memoire pour servir d'instruction a mon fils alant en angleterre et holande, et ce outre les memoires cy apres concernant les vaisseaux remarquera en holande principalement," BnF NAF 21399, fols. 252-257 (ca. 1671). On the European travels of young court nobles of the period, see Motley, *Becoming a French Aristocrat*, 187-192; F. Du Soucy, *L'Art de voyager utilement où l'on apprend à bien servir son prince, sa patrie, et soy mesme* (Paris: 1650); Pierre Clément, ed., *L'Italie en 1671. Relation d'un voyage du marquis de Seignelay* (Paris, 1867).

[61] These *mémoires* on the arsenal at Venice, the Dutch fleet, and the English navy are in BnF NAF 21399, fols. 115-138v (Venice), 186-204v (Dutch), 258-279 (English).

[62] Colbert to P. Arnoul (Oct. 24, 1670), reproduced in Clément, *Lettres de Colbert*, III[1]: 302.

[63] For example, after describing the phases of naval construction practiced by Dutch builders, which allowed them to examine and re-size timbers throughout the building process by eyeballing the contours of the hull, he wrote: "What I find most advantageous in this method is that [the carpenters] have the leisure to consider the curve of their ship and to adjust it up to the point where they no longer find fault with it, instead of having the timbers [*varangues*] posed so that a carpenter—who could only examine his work once this was done—cannot recognize its faults until there is no longer time to fix them. This leads me to conclude that [the Dutch] method, on this point, is the easiest and most sure, even though it seems that the rules followed by most of our master carpenters for the cutting of their timbers is more certain than a [carpenter's] eye that relies only on the practice and experience that he has acquired." This method, he argued, allowed the ship's sides to be joined more securely, and gave carpenters the freedom to examine the hull from inside and out. *Mémoire* concerning the Dutch fleet, BnF NAF 21399, fols. 186-204v; also in BnF Cinq Cents de Colbert 201, fols. 9-10, quoted in Dessert, *La Royale*, 125-126.

following year, he rewarded Pierre with a commission as controller-general on campaign with the fleet at Rochefort.[64]

Pierre's reports reached Colbert with particular force because they advanced two of the minister's larger aims: to standardize the tools of French economic life, and to build a library of all knowledge useful to the state.[65] In the mid-1670s, Colbert revealed the extent of his ambitions for Pierre's expertise when he asked him to help develop "a theory on the subject of ship construction," including the precise proportions of a "perfect" ship and the pieces that composed it, so that in future the king's fleets could be built according to proven standards of measurement and method—to ensure, as he put it to another official, that "that which has until now depended upon the fancy [*fantaisie*] of carpenters is founded upon certain and invariable rules."[66] The minister believed that warships, like tolls or laws or weights and measures, could be regularized in order to make the outcomes of royal policy more efficient and predictable.[67] He ordered Arnoul to choose the best vessels of each rank at Toulon, oversee the technical drafting of their profiles and designs, confirm the accuracy of these drawings by examining the ships himself, and then

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[64] "[Colbert] se faisoit un plaisir et une estude de se faire lire chaque jour ce que m. arnoul avoit fait cette mesme journée dans le temps que se delassoit le soir avec m. ses enfans." Autobiographical notes, BnF NAF 21416, fol. 25. On Pierre's appointment as *commissaire-général*, see fols. 25v-27. By this time, Colbert's library was already well on its way to becoming "a documentary collection based on the interests of administering the state." Soll, *Information Master*, 95.

[65] On the minister's efforts to impose standards of quality on French economic life, see Eli F. Heckscher, *Mercantilism*, 2 vols. (1931; repr. New York, 1955), I: 102-106, 110-127, 157-184; Cole, *Colbert and a Century*, II: 363-457. On his data bank, see Soll, *Information Master*; Soll, "From Note-Taking to Data Banks: Personal and Institutional Information Management in Early Modern Europe," *Intellectual History Review* 20, no. 3 (2010): 373.

[66] Colbert to Desclouzeaux, AN Marine B^2 38, fol. 462 (Nov. 19, 1678), quoted in Dessert, *La Royale*, 149.

[67] On Colbert's campaign to standardize tolls, laws, industrial production, weights and measures, and other spheres of domestic life, see Cole, *Colbert and a Century*, II: 132-548; Heckscher, *Mercantilism*, 102-106, 110-127, 157-184. One of the chief successes of this campaign was the unification of weights and measures between the various naval arsenals and Paris, suggesting that in this area, too, the ports were a key site of monarchical centralization.

assemble a group of three or four artisans and naval officers to deliberate over what should be included among "the [just] measures and proportions necessary to perfect constructions."[68] The minister sent similar requests to all the ports, but Pierre's memorandum detailing his meeting with Toulon's master carpenters and Admiral Abraham Duquesne drew special praise from Colbert and revealed a deeper involvement in the deliberations than did the reports of his Ponant counterparts.[69] His firsthand experience with naval carpentry thus positioned him to serve as a rare conduit between the practical know-how of naval craftsmen and Colbert's library, allowing the minister to exert greater control over the construction of royal ships even if he could not always prevail over the "fancy" of carpenters.[70]

Pierre's learning, then, advanced Colbert's ambitions for the service. The minister had been trying unsuccessfully for years to match the speed of shipbuilding in Venice, where galleys were routinely assembled in less than a day, and in England and Holland, where ships of the line were constructed in three or four months (compared to France's sluggish twelve to eighteen).[71] He also had been working

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[68] Colbert had long resolved to pursue such a theory, but had been forced to wait until "many years of experience" had accumulated before launching the endeavor. Colbert to P. Arnoul (Sep. 12, 1678), reproduced in Clément, *Lettres*, III[1]: 125-126.

[69] Duquesne was considered an authority in naval constructions in his own right, and both Pierre and Colbert tended to defer to his judgment, believing that those who actually navigated vessels were more reliable witnesses to their quality than those who built them. Colbert did not trust that any one individual had complete knowledge of shipbuilding, however, which explains why he wanted intendants, carpenters, and naval officers to work together toward this "theory." Some of his most trusted advisors on the policy of naval construction were the Arnoul, Seignelay, Duquesne, Intendant of Rochefort Colbert de Terron, Intendant of Brest Jean-Baptiste Chertemps de Seuil, and Admiral Anne Hilarion de Costentin de Tourville. Mémain, *La marine de guerre*, 697-707; Dessert, *La Royale*, 139-157. Saint-Simon later wrote of Tourville, "[he] had a perfect grasp of all aspects of the navy, from that of the carpenter to that of an excellent admiral." Louis de Rouvroy, duc de Saint-Simon, *Memoires de Saint-Simon*, ed. Arthur-Michel de Boislisle, 22 vols. (Paris, 1873-1886), III: 18.

[70] Dessert, *La Royale*, 149-150.

[71] Colbert ordered Toulon, Brest, and Rochefort to experiment with pre-fabricated materials in order to increase the efficiency of naval construction. Both Ponant ports fell short of Toulon's standard, requiring twelve to fifteen hours to build a ship of similar proportions. Pierre was able to repeat his

doggedly to extract the arcane secrets of naval construction from a renowned Marseillais family of *constructeurs*, the Chabert, who refused even to give lessons in carpentry for fear of losing their trade.[72] For the minister, Pierre's triumph likely represented not only the promise of increased efficiency, but also an important victory against the sort of self-interested concealment of knowledge that perpetually limited the king's sphere of action. Pierre himself certainly believed that shipbuilding was crucial to his standing as a client. When he returned to service following a brief disgrace in 1679—Colbert had blamed the loss of two ships in a storm on rushed repairs under Pierre's supervision—he thanked Seignelay for arranging his reappointment, promising above all to take further lessons in construction.[73] The selection and "method of assembling" pieces of wood into ships had by then become a defining feature of his administrative reputation.

Pierre demonstrated his value to Colbert and the king not only by achieving feats of construction and administration on the ground, but also by translating his experience into regulations that standardized the process of shipbuilding more generally. As early as 1671, due in large part to Pierre's own recommendations, the crown decreed the establishment of naval construction councils, or *conseils de construction*. Composed of carpenters, naval officers, and intendants at each of the ports, the councils met regularly to approve and supervise the work of construction and repair. Louis's decree explained that "experience makes us recognize every day the flaws we encounter in our navigation and the means to improve them," and he

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achievement in Seignelay's presence when the marquis visited Toulon several months later. Dessert, *La Royale*, 146-158.

[72] Bamford, *Fighting Ships and Prisons*, 74-76; Cole, *Colbert and a Century*, I: 454.

[73] P. Arnoul to Seignelay, BnF NAF 21328, fols. 82-82v (Mar. 10, 1681).

created the councils in order to ensure that French ships were built longer and smaller, with flat-timber bottoms, a lower gun deck, and reduced height between the bridges, among other innovations meant to mimic the strengths of English and Dutch vessels.[74] The inclusion of a variety of officers and artisans with different relationships to the building process—carpenters who designed and assembled the ships, intendants who conducted the labor and resources, and admirals who commanded and inhabited the final product—was intended as a sort of quality control that would prevent abuses and harness the collective wisdom of the king's *gens de mer*. In 1673, again at Pierre's urging, Louis ordered the councils to build vessels of each rate according to specified, uniform dimensions.[75]

In all of these ways, Pierre's apprenticeship both reflected and helped establish a new administrative setting in which specialized knowledge of maritime affairs was a prerequisite for appointment. In a joint effort that united familial self-interest with the crown's maritime ambitions, Nicolas and Colbert sought to make of him a "*bon marin sur terre*"—a landed seaman whose mastery of naval skills would be matched only by his command of paperwork.[76] Pierre's training therefore anticipated the instruction of Seignelay, which likewise drew upon a complex array of intellectual sources—the humanist tradition, Jesuit pedagogy, administrative *usages*, the law, and the commercial world of bookkeeping and travelogues—all of which privileged lucid prose, detailed and organized reporting, and massive amounts of red tape.[77] His

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[74] See Ordinance of Mar. 12, 1671 and AN Marine B2 13, fols. 51-54, discussed in Dessert, *La Royale*, 142-143.
[75] Alexandre Lambert de Sainte-Croix, *Essai sur l'administration de la marine de France, 1689-1792* (Paris: Calmann Lévy, 1892), 79-80.
[76] N. Arnoul to Colbert, BnF NAF 21308, fols. 464v-465 (Mar. 19, 1669).
[77] Soll, *Information Master*, 86-88.

apprenticeship conditioned him to the specific routines and demands of his father's work: in his speech, his writing, and his habits, Pierre learned to embody the image of an able administrator and a consummate expert in all aspects of maritime service, one whose presence in the ports could bring France's fleets under greater royal control. Maintaining that image would assure his position as a leading voice in the articulation of French naval, commercial, and diplomatic policy for a further five decades.

The Strategy Stymied: Pierre and Nicolas-François at Toulon and Rochefort

On its own, Pierre's training seems to represent a successful union of family strategy, specialized knowledge, and state power. Yet the experience of Pierre's youngest brother, Nicolas-François, reveals how highly personalized and conditional that union was. Despite the mentorship and protection of his powerful brother, Nicolas-François was unable to inherit Pierre's technical expertise, and instead of following in his footsteps he seemed, for the two decades preceding his own appointment as intendant of Martinique, to toil in Pierre's shadow. Several other factors may explain his deferred advancement: fraternal negligence, a failure of patronage, the deaths of Nicolas and Colbert, incompetence, a reputation for debauchery, newly-fixed standards of promotion, or social bias against cadet brothers, to name a few. Whatever the case, knowledge passed down and built upon *de père en fils* did not translate *de frère en frère*. At a time when state knowledge still resided in the minds or personal papers of individual servants rather than in centralized archives, Nicolas-François's failure to reproduce his brother's knowledge represented a breakdown in what had previously been a successful transmission of learning from one administrator to the next. This sort of "breakdown" is rarely accounted for in

works that define state knowledge only as the disembodied content of written sources, yet in the case of Nicolas-François, it reduced in concrete ways a productive union of expertise and monarchical ambition to a dull marriage of passable service and delayed rewards.[78]

At the time of Nicolas' death, Nicolas-François appeared destined for a career as a soldier of God. In 1668 his parents had placed him with the military Order of Saint Sépulchre at just five years old, with the understanding that until he could begin his noviciate and take his vows his education would be in the hands of the hospitallers of Saint John at Marseille.[79] Had he remained in the Order he likely would have become a galley captain, but plans for him changed when his father died and the children's inheritance was thrown into doubt, and at age ten he was placed by Pierre on a ship bound for war against the Dutch.[80] The following year he began studies at the collège de Clermont under the care of a *précepteur*.[81] At some point Pierre decided that his youngest brother "appeared more suited to the pen [than the sword]" and "pushed him in that direction."[82] In 1679 Pierre wrote Seignelay that he was training his brother for service.[83] Over the next decade Nicolas-François would rotate between Toulon, Paris, Brest, Havre, and Rochefort, learning the practice of

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[78] On the failure of current models of the knowledge-state equation to account for "breakdown," see Cheney and Charles, "The Colonial Machine Dismantled."

[79] Nicolas-François's young age required his parents to obtain a special dispensation from the master of the Order. "Décision de Nicolas Cotoner, maître de l'hospital de Saint Jean de Jérusalem," BnF NAF 21416, fols. 231-232v (Jan. 19, 1668). A later letter between the two brothers suggests that Nicolas-François indeed spent much of his early youth at the hospital. Vaucresson to P. Arnoul, BnF NAF 21430, fol. 295v (Feb. 17, 1715).

[80] Vaucresson to P. Arnoul, 17 February 1715, NAF 21430, fol. 292.

[81] Compte de dépenses de M. de Vaucresson, 1676, Archives Départementales des Bouches-du-Rhône [hereafter ADBR], 5E 23.

[82] Autobiographical notes, BnF NAF 21416, fol. 80.

[83] P. Arnoul to Seignelay, BnF NAF 21327, fols. 211v-212 (Aug. 15, 1679). Nicolas-François later pointed to this year as the beginning of his career in service. Vaucresson to Pontchartrain, Archives nationales d'Outre-Mer (hereafter ANOM), C^{8A} 16, fol. 390 (Aug. 22, 1708).

administration under his brother while taking lessons in arms, dance, writing, Latin, and arithmetic in his spare time.[84]

The evidence of Nicolas-François's early schooling is patchy, but there was more to his education than formal instruction and on-the-job training: the household environment in which he was raised, too, likely shaped him as a person and an administrator. The two intendant's residences where the Arnoul lived during his childhood served both as the administrative hearts of Toulon and Marseille and as training centers for future officers of the Marine. From their second-story rooms at the *Maison du Roi* of Marseille, members of the family could observe all of the workshops and construction sites within the arsenal.[85] Two cousins, barely older than Nicolas-François, lived with the Arnoul and took writing lessons before receiving commissions under Nicolas and Pierre; a third Arnoul brother, Raoul, was put to work by Pierre arming ships and learning hydrography and cannonry from local experts before entering the naval officer corps.[86] In addition to witnessing up close the business of the intendancy and the training of his closest kin, Nicolas-François was exposed to the array of classical, Christian, royal, and maritime imagery that decorated his family's home. This included a dozen naval maps; portraits of Louis,

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[84] Compte de dépenses de M. de Vaucresson, 1679, BnF NAF 21416, fol. 408; Bill for items provided by Du Cunoy to Mr. de Vaucresson for writing lessons, fols. 421-421v (Jun. 30, 1682); Bill for writing lessons and materials given by M. de Biere to M. de Vaucresson, BnF NAF 21417, fol. 11 (Oct. 6, 1685); Bill for Latin and dance lessons, fol. 12 (Oct. 6, 1685). All bills were signed by Nicolas-François himself and paid through Pierre's agent in Paris. These payments are listed elsewhere among Pierre's personal expenses for the years 1679, 1682, and 1685. "Estat de la recepte et despence faite pour Monsieur Arnoul," BnF NAF 21403, fols. 41, 43-44 (1679), 115 (1682), 291-291v (1685). See also the accounts for these years and those of 1676, 1684 contained in ADBR, 5E 23-24.

[85] Masson, *Les galères de France*, 181.

[86] P. Arnoul to Seignelay, BnF NAF 21327, fols. 211v-212 (Aug. 15, 1679). These lessons in cannonry and hydrography were first established by Nicolas. On the writing lessons and appointments of the Croiset, cousins of the Arnoul, see "Recette et Depence que j'ay fait pour Monsieur l'Intendant," BnF NAF 21416, fols. 239-252 (May 1, 1674); "Liste generale des off. de finances et de plumes de la Marine, des Galeres, et des Colonies, et autres entretenus," AN Marine C^2 55, fol. 95v.

Colbert, Seignelay, Louvois, Oppède, and Louis's late Superintendant of Navigations, Cesar de Vendôme; as well as paintings of the burning of Rome, the miracles of Saint Mark, and the sale of Joseph by his brothers.[87] At Toulon the Arnoul coat of arms was etched into the four corners of the *magasin général*.[88] To what extent these images served a didactic purpose or moulded the values of Nicolas-François is impossible to say, but neither he nor Pierre—nor any of their visitors—could have remained long in these surroundings without knowing what their family's faith was, who their patrons were, and how important royal service and the sea were to their family's present and future prospects.[89]

During and after the years of Nicolas-François's apprenticeship, the brothers' residences reflected a deepening identification with maritime life and intellectual pursuits. Their shared home at Rochefort displayed paintings of a galeasse, a tempest, and the beginnings of the arsenal of Marseille, and they kept collections of seashells and Dutch medals. They also owned a pair of spyglasses, a barometer, a thermometer, architectural instruments and books, and guides to navigation and

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[87] Where and how the family displayed these images is unknown, but most of them were framed at the time of Nicolas's death. "Memoire des meubles qui ont estes Embarquis sur la Barque du patron Jacques decagis de la Ciontat, le 9e fev 1675," BnF NAF 21416, fols. 288-291v; "Estat des meubles portez par l'inventaire faict apres le deces de Nicolas Arnoul lesquels n'ayant point alors esté estimez n'estant pas apparamment l'usage du pays ont a present esté mis a prix suivant ce qu'on eu connoist et sur l'avis d'un tapissier et Chaudronier conseillez a ce sujet," fols. 305-307v (ca. 1686?).

[88] According to Nicolas's biography, he was "so beloved" following his first stint at Toulon that "when he left this intendancy, the *consuls en chaperon* placed his arms at the four corners of the [magazine], which remained there always, even up to the time when the new arsenal was built." Biography of Nicolas Arnoul, BnF NAF 21416, fol. 1v. Among the family's papers is a piece of masonry, presumably from this building, in which the Arnoul coat of arms has been carved.

[89] The boys also would have come into contact with a stream of honored guests who joined the family at table. The Arnouls' expense accounts for 1674-1675 list galleys captains, commissioners, Venetian and Spanish ambassadors, the chevalier Le Febvre de La Barre (chef d'escadre, former governor of Cayenne, and future governor of Canada), and the chevalier de Valbelle (in whose fleet Nicolas-François would serve that year) among those who dined at the intendant's residence at Toulon. Comptes de dépenses tenus par Tournay, sécretaire de l'intendant des galères, ADBR, 5E 17.

hydrography.[90] At Rochefort, Toulon, and Marseille, their assortment of patrons' and allies' likenesses grew to include portraits of Seignelay, Pontchartrain, and the military engineer Vauban; the Marshal of France and Caribbean naval specialist, Jean II d'Estrées; Intendant of the Galleys Jean-Baptiste-Nicolas de Brodart and the intendant of Marseille and Rochefort, Michel Bégon; as well as a medal depicting the Grand Admiral of France and governor of Brittany, Louis-Alexandre de Bourbon.[91] In addition to many religious tableaux, Pierre owned paintings of maritime scenery, a shipwreck, naval battles, the port and arsenal of Marseille, and two "philosophes," together with maps of Naples, Rome, Genoa, London, Copenhagen, Messina, Nantes, La Rochelle, Marseille, Provence, England, Asia, and the Mediterranean, all of which eventually hung throughout his *château* at Rochegude.[92] Nicolas-François, for his part, later acquired two tables whose gilded legs were carved to resemble African figures—a motif that may have been inspired by his years in Martinique—as well as seven maps of French provinces that he kept in his study.[93] These practical and decorative objects suggest that the brothers' patterns of consumption and display

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[90] "Meubles qui doive. se trouver au Comtat de ceux sont venus de Rochefort," BnF NAF 21417, fols. 258-258v (Oct. 2, 1699). On the purchase of the barometer, thermometer, architectural instruments, and books, see Comptes domestiques for 1676 and 1679, ADBR, 5E 23-24.

[91] "Estate de mes meubles venûes de Toulon qui doivent se trouver encore a Carpentras et a Baume," NAF 21417, fols. 259-261 (Oct. 2, 1699). Nicolas-François's note on fol. 262v states that these possessions had been transported from Rochefort to Toulon before being moved to the family's estates at Carpentras and Baume. On Brodart as co-*tuteur* of Pierre's surviving children, along with Nicolas-François and others, see notarial record of guardianship in BnF NAF 21418, fols. 297-298.

[92] "Rôle des tableaux apartenants à la succession de feu Mr. arnoul, qui n'ont pas esté vendûs," BnF NAF 21418, fols. 242-244 (Dec. 29, 1722); "Inventaire General des Meubles qui se sont trouvées dans le Chateau de Rochegude donts le sr. Anselme Ecclesiastique s'est chargé le dixieme octobre mil sept cent dix huit, et qu'il rend à mrs. Pierre Terrasse et Joseph Gaud, deputés et Commis par Monseigneur l'Intendant de vaucresson, le douze juin mil sept cens vingt deux," BnF NAF 21418, fols. 225-241 (Jul. 12, 1722).

[93] The tables were kept in his bedroom. "Inventaire des meubles, Linge, argenterie, et autres Effets apartenant a M. de Vaucresson, Intendant general des galeres," BnF NAF 21418, fols. 251-259v (Aug. 14, 1725).

were bound up intimately with royal patronage, the cultivation of knowledge, and the naval-colonial world in which they lived and worked.

The family's marriage alliances further cemented its place in that world. Shortly after Nicolas's death, his widow remarried to Horace-Joseph de Rus, *seigneur* de Raffelis, the elder son of a ship's captain from Carpentras. Pierre's youngest sister, Geneviéve, was promised to Horace-Joseph's younger brother, Pierre-Dominique, a captain of the galleys. And Pierre himself married the two brothers' widowed mother.[94] These alliances did not necessarily reflect a conscious strategy to marry into the world of naval officerdom—Pierre later claimed to have been "bewitched" by Madame de Rus when he consented to them—but that was their effect: the children and grandchildren of Pierre-Dominique and Geneviéve would include five officers of the navy and galleys, and Pierre would remarry to Brodart's daughter.[95] Nicolas had removed his family from its base in Picardy and Paris (where the Arnoul nonetheless maintained a home and the nearby seigneuries of Nicolas-

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[94] The royal genealogist who recorded these marriages in the Arnoul family history marveled that "par l'arrangement singulier de cette femme ingénieuse [Madame de Rus], Pierre Arnoul devint tout à la fois beau-père de ses deux fils, beau-fils de l'aîné et beau-frère du puiné, tandis qu'elle devint elle-même belle fille de son fils aîné et belle-soeur de son fils puiné, le fils aîné beau père de sa mère et de son beau-père, le fils puiné beau-frère de sa mère, beau-fils de son frère et gendre de sa belle-soeur, etc. ; et tout [231] cela sans dispense et sans inceste." BnF Cabinet des titres, dossier bleu 744: Arnoul, quoted in Saint-Simon, *Memoires*, VI: 230n1. See also Jean-Antoine Pithon-Curt, *Histoire de la noblesse du Comté-Venaissin, d'Avignon et de la principauté d'Orange* (1750; Paris, 1970 repr.), IV: 566-573.

[95] Madame de Rus was Françoise de Soissans de la Bédosse, a friend of the royal mistress, Madame de Maintenon. According to Pierre and several contemporaries, Rus manipulated the family's grief and Pierre's distraction to contract the triple marriage and thereby seize the Arnoul fortune. Autobiographical notes, BnF NAF 21416, fols. 27-80; "Memoire pour la justification du sr. Arnoul sur ce qui peut avoir causé sa disgrace outre la perte des travaux," NAF 21416, fols. 396-399v (1679 or 1680); Anne-Marguerite Du Noyer, *Mémoires et lettres galantes de Madame du Noyer (1663-1720*) (Paris, 1910), 134-139; Saint-Simon, *Memoires*, VI: 222-231. Pierre's 1704 marriage contract with Henriette de Brodart testified to the riches accumulated by the Arnoul in the four decades following Nicolas's appointment to Marseille. Brodart provided a dowry of 287,000 pounds, while Pierre made her a gift of diamond earrings, a diamond and peridot *carquan*, a diamond buckle, two *toilettes* (one of velour, the other for silverware), pieces of gold-braided fabric, a fur stole, scarves, a repeater watch, and more, at values ranging from upwards of 500 to nearly 25,000 pounds. Masson, *Les galères de France*, 368.

François and La Tour Ronde), but within a generation his children managed to entrench themselves within the pen and sword nobilities of Provence and the Comté-Venaissin. Rooting themselves along the Mediterranean ensured the Arnouls' long-term stake in an ongoing effort to integrate one of France's fiscal-military "frontiers."[96]

For Nicolas-François, the family's deepening identification with maritime service did not lead him to develop a unique persona or fund of knowledge independent of Pierre. The uncertainty of Pierre's temporary disgrace in 1679 may have distracted both of them from his apprenticeship.[97] Nicolas-François did attend collège during this time, but he was still learning Latin, writing, and arithmetic when he received his first appointment as commissioner in 1681. Despite Pierre's later claims that he had "hired all sorts of masters and forgotten nothing that could have contibuted to [his brothers'] education," there is no evidence that Pierre paid for Nicolas-François to receive the same expert tutoring in mathematics or fortifications that Nicolas had provided for him, nor that he sent him into the shipyards for months of study with master craftsmen.[98] Nor is there any sign that Nicolas-François sought

[96] Blaufarb, "Survival of the *Pays d'États*."

[97] Seignelay to P. Arnoul, BnF NAF 21326, fols. 96-96v (Feb. 3, 1679); Seignelay to P. Arnoul, fol. 296v (Mar. 18, 1679); Seignelay to P. Arnoul, fols. 341-343 (Apr. 3, 1679); Seignelay to P. Arnoul, fols. 410-410v (Apr. 15, 1679); Colbert to P. Arnoul, BnF NAF 21327, fol. 241 (Sep. 6, 1679). Ironically, Pierre's devotion to paperwork counted against him in the months preceding his disgrace: Colbert excoriated his tendency to lock himself up in his study writing useless *mémoires* instead of performing his duties in the arsenal. Colbert to P. Arnoul (Nov. 8, 1679), excerpted in Clément, *Lettres de Colbert*, III^2: 170-171.

[98] Nicolas-François's study of Latin and writing continued for at least another three years. Autobiographical notes, BnF NAF 21416, fol. 87. Later in life Nicolas-François would reproach Pierre for giving him a second-rate education. Vaucresson to P. Arnoul, BnF NAF 21430, fol. 292 (Feb. 17, 1715).

to emulate his brother in any respect but his wealth.[99] As a result, Nicolas-François began his career with very little training, no technical knowledge, and none of the reputation with his patrons that Pierre had enjoyed at the same age.

The unexpected change of scenery from Provence to the Ponant nonetheless reoriented Nicolas-François's career toward the Atlantic.[100] In 1682 he received appointments as commissioner at Brest and at Havre before joining Pierre at Rochefort three years later.[101] As a *commissaire*, Nicolas-François's duties required him to supervise on his brother's behalf a range of business including mustering, magazines, artillery, and shipbuilding and repairs.[102] To what extent he applied himself to his work is unclear—there were rumors that he was a pleasure-seeker—but Pierre would contend later that his own encouragement, combined with his brother's

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[99] During Nicolas-François's tenure at Martinique, the brothers quarreled to the point of estrangement over Pierre's alleged mismanagement of their inheritance. Nicolas-François accused him of having given his siblings only miserly stipends during their youths, while Pierre insisted that he had been generous even in the leanest of times. Eventually they reached a settlement and reconciled with the help of an arbiter. Vaucresson to P. Arnoul, BnF NAF 21430, fols. 291-297 (Feb. 17, 1715), 299-301v (Mar. 14, 1715). Some of Pierre's autobiographical notes appear to have been written during this time, since he stresses repeatedly and perhaps defensively the good he had done for his siblings "from their earliest years." Autobiographical notes, BnF NAF 21416, esp. fols. 79-90; also see the letters laying out his side of the dispute with Nicolas-François and their sisters, fols. 91-104. Nicolas-François had reason to be jealous of Pierre's wealth, which in these years included a yearly salary of around 14,000 *livres*, a 6,000-*livre* annual pension as inspector of commerce, Henriette de Brodart's dowry of 287,000 *livres*, several fiefs, the revenues of *le Marquisat*, much valuable silver and plate, and a small army of servants that included a factotum (at 800 *livres* per year), a *maître d'hôtel* (400), a head cook (300), numerous cooks and cook's assistants (100-150), two coachmen (154 each), a gamekeeper (120), and several lackeys (100 each). Masson, *Les galères de France*, 368-369; the family accounts and inventories after death cited above also attest to Pierre's wealth.

[100] This was equally true for Raoul, who received an appointment aboard the king's ships as an ensign in 1681. Raoul, also known as Naugeville, makes no further appearances in the archives except for a passing reference to his untimely death in Pierre's notes. P. Arnoul to Seignelay, 23 January 1681, BnF NAF 21328, fols. 23v (Jan. 23, 1681), 46v (Feb. 15, 1681); Autobiographical notes, BnF NAF 21416, fol. 79v.

[101] Nicolas-François likely served as an uncommissioned scribe. No official evidence of his service on this campaign survives, but Pierre's expenses for December 1679 included 110 pounds "pour [Nicolas-François's] necessitez de la camp'e sur le parfait." "Estat de la recepte et despence faite pour Monsieur Arnoul," BnF NAF 21403, fol. 45 (Dec. 1679). For Nicolas-François's commissioned appointments, see "Liste generale des off. de finances et de plumes de la Marine, des Galeres, et des Colonies, et autres entretenus," AN Marine C^2 55, fol. 11.

[102] Claude Aboucaya, *Les intendants de la marine*, 39-40; Mémain, *La marine de guerre*, 466-469;

"probity" and "constant attention to his duties," gave Nicolas-François a firm enough grounding in the service that he was able to earn posts "as great as his own."[103]

The details of Nicolas-François's apprenticeship to his brother at Rochefort are obscure largely because Pierre was not nearly as enthusiastic an advocate as their father had been for him. Pierre consistently passed up chances to nominate Nicolas-François for advancement or for special missions that might have let him prove himself to the minister, and he never left his brother in charge when he was away, as Nicolas had done for him at a much younger age, perhaps because Nicolas-François indeed loved his pleasures excessively.[104] In 1684 the brothers did travel together to Amsterdam to purchase ships and gunpowder on Seignelay's orders, but the fate of their mission is unknown, and in any case it produced no further opportunities of its kind for Nicolas-François.[105]

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[103] Autobiographical notes, BnF NAF 21416, fol. 87. When lower positions in the Marine became venal, Pierre helped Nicolas-François purchase the office of *commissaire*—a position he had already held for two decades—as a necessary prerequisite for his appointment as intendant of Martinique. "Déclaration de Panon, Chancelier du Consulat de la nation française à Cadis," BnF NAF 21417, fols. 171-172 (Apr. 24, 1703). On Nicolas-François's pleasure-seeking, see Sara Chapman, *Private Ambition and Political Alliances: The Phélypeaux de Pontchartrain Family and Louis XIV's Government, 1650-1715* (Rochester, NY, 2004), 126.

[104] It was in Pierre's interest to recommend only capable candidates for promotion, and if Nicolas-François was indeed a poor worker, he may have been a risky appointment; or Pierre, already assured of his brother's loyalty, may have been focused on building an extra-familial network of clients in the port. Whatever the case he reserved all of his praise for his senior *commissaire*, Mauclerc, and another commissioner, Du Guay, whom he cited respectively as "le plus capable" and "le plus intelligent" among his staff. In 1687 it was Mauclerc whom he proposed over Du Guay for the vacant position of commissioner-general, without any mention of Nicolas-François. P. Arnoul to Seignelay, BnF NAF 21332, fol. 120v (Sep. 21, 1685); P. Arnoul to Seignelay, BnF NAF 21334, fol. 92v (May 6, 1687); P. Arnoul to Seignelay, fol. 105 (May 15, 1687).

[105] The orders were sent directly to Nicolas-François, and they presumed that he would know how to assess the quality of the ships' construction and to outfit them for a journey from Holland to Provence at minimal expense. Nicolas-François had probably been recommended for this mission by Pierre, but Seignelay clearly had little idea of who he was, expressing confusion about whether he should call him Arnoul or Vaucresson. Seignelay to P. Arnoul, BnF NAF 21330, fol. 6 (Jan. 11, 1684); Seignelay to P. Arnoul, fol. 24 (Feb. 6, 1684); Seignelay to Vaucresson, fol. 35 (Feb. 28, 1684); "Estat de la recepte et despence faite pour Monsieur Arnoul," Jul. 1682-Jun. 1684, BnF NAF 21403, fol. 234. Pierre made no further requests on his brother's behalf during their time at Rochefort, except to have Nicolas-François's salary raised to equal that of his fellow commissioners and to beg Seignelay's indulgence

Despite failing to distinguish himself in these years, Nicolas-François's time in the Ponant eventually gave him enough experience to become a plausible candidate for promotion to an intendancy. At Rochefort he worked directly under Pierre, who was responsible for provisioning the colonies, arranging transport for newly-appointed intendants and governors, and maintaining correspondence with his counterparts in the New World. If Nicolas-François ever became curious about the islands, he could have asked his brother to lend him a two-volume history of the Antilles that Pierre owned; if he wanted to learn about New France, he could have questioned his close friend and cousin, Croiset, at that time chief scribe at Rochefort, who sailed to Québec on campaign in 1687; and if he wished to follow the latest news of Europe and the New World, he could read the foreign gazettes to which his brother subscribed.[106] Whether or not he took an interest is unknown, but between word-of-mouth, the publications at hand, and the demands of his position, Nicolas-François had access to a steady stream of information about the fleets, commerce, and colonies of France and its rivals.

Whereas Pierre's appointment as intendant appears to have been in good part a consequence of his ability to master and apply useful knowledge, Nicolas-François's

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when he fell sick with fever for over six months. Despite Nicolas-François's illness, Pierre wrote, somewhat ambiguously, that he "s'est toujours apliqué autant qu'il a pû." P. Arnoul to Seignelay, BnF NAF 21331, fol. 246v (Jun. 12, 1685).

[106] This must have been the *Histoire naturelle et morale des Îles Antilles de l'Amérique*, published in 1667 and attributed to Jean-Baptiste du Tertre. Pierre's expense accounts for Apr. 18, 1673 show the purchase of this and several other books, including a history of La Rochelle, Pascal's *Pensées*, Richelieu's *La perfection du chrestien*, Grenade's four-volume *Catechisme*, and the New Testament in duodecimo. "Despence faitte par boulliet a commencer du [blank] octobre apres avoir arresté les comptes du voiage d'Italie," BnF NAF 21402, fol. 48v (Apr. 18, 1673). Pierre's expenses for 1683 included 3 *livres* and 4 *sous* "pour les gazettes de bruxelles qui ont esté envoiées aud. sieur arnoul pendant lesd. mois." BnF NAF 21403, fol. 225v (May 1683). On Croiset's appointments and voyage to America, see "Liste generale des off. de finances et de plumes de la Marine, des Galeres, et des Colonies, et autres entretenus," AN Marine C^2 55, fol. 95v; Croiset to P. Arnoul, BnF NAF 21334, fols. 298-300 (Aug. 22, 1687).

seems to have resulted only from patronage, nepotism, and some amount of chance. It would take an additional eight years as *commissaire* at Brest, seven more as commissioner-general and controller at Marseille (a position Pierre obtained for him over two more senior candidates, including another Croiset cousin), and a fortunate meeting with Minister of Marine Louis de Pontchartrain's hard-drinking son, Jérôme, to bring Nicolas-François his appointment as intendant at Martinique in 1704.[107] Neither Pierre, nor Jérôme, nor any of Nicolas-François's contemporaries attributed this promotion to his superior administrative or intellectual qualities. Pontchartrain described him only as "well established...loyal, wise, hardworking" and "the brother of M. Arnoul," and Nicolas-François's commission included nothing more than the usual bland formalities.[108] Pierre credited his own influence.[109] The coincidence that Pierre was empowered to act as the minister's representative to the Royal Asiento

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[107] Nicolas-François met Jerôme de Pontchartrain while serving at Brest in 1695. Jerôme was then on a tour of the ports at his father's behest, learning the ways of the navy and recruiting young clients among its commissioners and scribes. He arrived at Brest drunk on brandy and bloodied from a fall, after which he and Nicolas-François became friendly. Chapman, *Private Ambition and Political Alliances*, 126-127.

[108] After meeting Nicolas-François at Brest, Jerôme praised him to his father: "The sieur de Vaucresson has served in all the employs of the arsenal, and so is very well established. He has always gone onto the ships when they have an army or strong squadron at the port. He has proven to be loyal, wise, hardworking, and, because he is such an able worker, it is good to give him many duties. He is the brother of M. Arnoul. Some have accused him in the past of loving his pleasures, but at present, he has returned to fulfilling his duties with exactitude." Several months later Jerôme wrote Nicolas-François to assure him of his protection. Chapman, *Private Ambition and Political Alliances*, 126-127. For Nicolas-François's commission as intendant of Martinique, see BnF NAF 21417, fol. 282 (Dec. 1, 1704).

[109] "That the intendancy of America having been vacated, M. Arnoul did not cease to solicit Pontchartrain father and son until he had obtained it for [Nicolas-François]...although the services of M. de Vaucresson, his experience and his integrity could have earned it, it was no certainty that he would have obtained it—the ministers not lacking for creatures and men of worth to place—without the kindness they have always had for M. Arnoul." Pierre added, perhaps to reassure Nicolas-François, who felt that his appointment to Martinique was a form of "exile," that "an intendancy of America is worth more than one in France, because the provisions that must be sent there are worth double what they cost in France and moreover because there is the help of the *negres* which other intendants do not have...it is one of the rewards of this intendancy that some of those who have held it before him have gained 4 and 500 livres [annually?] from it." Autobiographical notes, BnF NAF 21416, fol. 88; Vaucresson to P. Arnoul, BnF NAF 21430, fol. 301 (Mar. 14, 1715)

Company at nearly the same time that Nicolas-François received his appointment to Martinique suggests that Jérôme may have been seeking to consolidate control over the slave trade by positioning loyal, cooperative clients at both ends.[110] Nicolas-François, for his part, insisted that his brother had neglected to push his candidacy strongly enough over the years, despite the clout he held with Seignelay and the Pontchartrain; it was his own "seniority...the number of my campaigns, and my application in the arsenals" alone that had secured his advancement.[111]

Nicolas-François's failure to transform himself into an administrator capable of wielding useful, specialized knowledge coincided with adverse changes within the Marine and the crafts that supported it. It was still possible in these years for colonial and naval intendants on the make to distinguish themselves through individualized learning, as the careers of Antoine-Denis Raudot (versed in economics) and Michel Bégon de la Picardière (law) attest.[112] But the structures of training and promotion within the navy had shifted unfavorably since the 1660s and 1670s. On the military side, young officers were now required to pass through *écoles de la marine* that gave special instruction in navigation, hydrography, cannonry, fortifications, and

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[110] "Arrest qui commet le Sr. Arnoul à la place du Sr. Deshaguais pour en l'absence et sous les ordres du Sr. de Pontchartrain remplir les mesmes fonctions qu'il feroit s'il estoit present aux Assemblées de la Compagnie de l'Assiente," AN Marine C^7, dossier Arnoul, fols. 10-10v (Aug. 19, 1704). Six years later, when Vaucresson was still serving in Martinique, Pierre was granted inspection of the Royal Africa Company, which required him to familiarize himself with the details of the company's trade and to report his findings to the minister. "Arrest qui commet Mr. Arnoul pour avoir Inspection sur la Compagnie d'Affrique," AN Marine C^7, dossier Arnoul, fol. 12 (May 21, 1710).

[111] "Je conviens au reste que je dois avoir de la reconnoissance de çe que vous avéz fait pour mon avancem. mais est-ce à vous a mettre a un si haut prix vos bons offices à cet egard, et devriez vous par quelque fois songer que j'estois d'un nom a me pousser dans la marine, que j'ay esté mis tres jeune dans le service, que je n'ay esté avançé que suivant mon ancienneté, et que le nombre de mes Campagnes, et mon application dans les arsenaux pourroient méritoit de [possedé]?" Vaucresson to P. Arnoul, BnF NAF 21430, fol. 293v (Feb. 17, 1715).

[112] See their respective biographies in Dubé, *Les intendants de la Nouvelle-France*; entries on "Michel Bégon de la Picardière" and "Antoine-Denis Raudot," in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography* online: www.biographi.ca.

carpentry.[113] Officers of the pen had no schools of their own, but after 1689 they were expected, in principle, to ascend through fixed stages of advancement designed to impart the sort of "perfect familiarity with all aspects of the service" that Colbert had once demanded of Pierre.[114] Household apprenticeships for administrators had become old-fashioned—Pontchartrain actively discouraged them—and in 1684 the crown had begun to recruit "young men from good families" who were willing to work their way up as scriveners and commissioners.[115] Meanwhile, by the time of Nicolas-François's appointment to Martinique, the navy was already experimenting with institutional means of co-opting or instructing its own ship designers, engineers, and *constructeurs*. From the early decades of the eighteenth century onward, specialization within the service would increasingly divide administrators and technicians into separate spheres.[116]

Ironically, the same institutional changes that may have delayed Nicolas-François's appointment were a product, in part, of his family's numerous contributions to state knowledge about the Marine and galleys. Nicolas and Pierre were trusted authorities whose recommendations helped forge over time a consensus about how to guarantee the *bon fonctionnement* of the fleets. That consensus was codified in comprehensive regulations governing the administrative and technical aspects of the service, including promotion, known as *Ordonnances de la Marine*. Nicolas was one of a handful of authors credited by Colbert with the *Ordonnance* of

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[113] Vergé-Franceschi, *Marine et éducation sous l'Ancien Régime* (Paris, 1991), 72-98, 175-193, 209-217.
[114] Vergé-Franceschi, *La Marine française*, 203; Dessert, *La Royale*, 32.
[115] Gruder, *Royal Provincial Intendants*, 88; Mémain, *La marine de guerre*, 361.
[116] Taton, ed., *Enseignment et diffusion*, esp. Paul Gille, "Écoles de constructeurs de la Marine," 477-478.

1674; Pierre took a leading hand in drafting its more thoroughgoing successor fifteen years later.[117] Successive ministers sent copies of these regulations to every port, where they were to be posted, enforced, and read (and re-read annually) in order to ensure that all personnel could benefit from the accumulated expertise of the navy's leading lights.[118] Nicolas-François, who owed his career to his family's ability to remake the service in Colbert's rationalizing image, may have experienced it as a mixed blessing.

Conclusion

Even at the apex of their careers, the Arnoul brothers sometimes struggled to make knowledge work for them, and by extension for the crown. In Martinique, Nicolas-François suffered from the slowness and inconsistency of transatlantic communications, complained about the rats that chewed up his books, and proposed reforms to liberalize colonial commerce that fell on deaf ears despite being "well-considered" and approved by "those who know this trade *à fonds*."[119] Pierre devised a system of apprenticeship for diplomats, based on personal experience and conceived

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[117] When Intendant of Rochefort Honoré Lucas de Demuin wished to make changes to the Ordinance of 1674, Colbert reminded him, "il faut qu'il (Demuin) considère que ces réglemens ayant été faits sur les advis et mémoires du sieur Colbert de Terron, du feu sieur Arnoul, du sieur de Seüil et de tous les plus habils et plus anciens officiers de Marine, il doit s'appliquer à les faire exécuter...," quoted in Mémain, *La marine de guerre*, 276. On Pierre and the Ordinance of 1689, see Dessert, *La Royale*, 30-32.

[118] Demuin's instructions, for example, urged him to do a thoughtful and extensive reading of all documents and regulations concerning the Marine, past and present, including all of his predecessor's correspondence. In his first months at Rochefort he produced *mémoires* based on these readings that demonstrated his grasp of their contents. Mémain, *La marine de guerre*, 271, 371, 422-423, appendix VI. At the end of each year the intendants were supposed to review the previous ten years' worth of regulations in order to refresh their memory of them. Mémain, *La marine de guerre*, 369.

[119] For his complaints about the rats, see Vaucresson to Pontchartrain, ANOM, Fonds ministériels, C^{8A} 20, fol. 103v (Oct. 26, 1714) and C^{8A} 19, fol. 349 (May 20, 1713). For Nicolas-François's proposal to reform trade and the lack of response, see Vaucresson to Pontchartrain, C^{8B} 2, fol. 92v (Jun. 1, 1708); Pontchartrain to Vaucresson, B 31, fols. 95-99v (Jul. 25, 1708). On the slowness and uncertainty of transatlantic communications, see Kenneth Banks, *Chasing Empire Across the Sea: Communications and the State in the French Atlantic, 1713-1763* (Montréal and Kingston, 2003).

at a time of serious need, and received no formal response from his superiors.[120] Beyond what survived in the *Ordonnances de la Marine*, moreover, the brothers' expertise seems to have been lost with their deaths. Pierre used his influence to advance his nephews' careers, but there is little evidence that he trained them, and his own sons appear not to have entered royal service; Nicolas-François died unmarried and childless.[121] However much the Arnoul contributed to the long-term bureaucratization of France's navy, galleys, and colonies, the knowledge they produced remained fundamentally tied to their bodies, their personal authorities, and the material and institutional conditions in which they worked.

Despite these instances of breakdown, there were ways in which the Arnouls' careers represented the successful union of knowledge and state power. That union lasted because the Arnoul were willing to give Colbert what they thought he wanted—when he did not ask for it explicitly—in exchange for rewards that rescued the family from ruin and elevated it to a prominent place among Louis's most favored servants. Pierre owed his rapid ascent in large part, of course, to his father's reputation and guidance, ministerial protection, and the timely expansion of Louis's overseas ambitions, but his ability to master technical as well as administrative skills made him uniquely valuable in his own right. In a kingdom where power devolved from the monarch and weakened at every remove from his person, Pierre, like his

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[120] Arnoul's proposal resembled Colbert de Torcy's Académie politique, founded in 1712. Guy Thuillier, "Aux origines de l'académie politique de Louis XIV: Le projet de Pierre Arnoul (1696 ?)," *La revue administrative*, 42e année, no. 247 (Jan.-Fev. 1989): 15-18.

[121] Pierre did, however, make provision in his will for his third son to receive 15,000 *livres* per year beyond his annual stipend of 12,000 *livres* as soon as he reached majority and "est en estat de tenir galere au service de la Religion de malthe." Draft of the last will of Pierre Arnoul, BnF NAF 21418, fol. 187v (ca. 1718). Nicolas-François left his entire fortune to the *Hôtel-Dieu* of Marseille. Masson, *Les galères de France*, 369.

contemporary and sometime collaborator Vauban, was one of the rare royal servants capable of strengthening the state at its borders (and even beyond). Also like Vauban, he did so by placing artisanal know-how under crown control for the first time. Although Colbert left the day-to-day business of training Pierre to Nicolas, he groomed him much as he had groomed Vauban and would soon groom Seignelay, moulding him into a valuable craftsman of state knowledge.[122] In each case the emphasis was different. Pierre was neither a born-and-bred minister of state nor a specialist in urban fortifications, although his training equipped him to deal intelligently with both. He was, instead, a landed administrator who could make the king's presence felt overseas by constructing, staffing, and servicing his ships and ports.

The Arnoul case thus serves as a reminder that state formation occurred not only in courts, colonies, and provincial capitals, but also on the edges of the sea. The family's ability to govern areas that had remained stubbornly beyond royal control was as significant to its patrons as any specialized learning.[123] That effort required daily interactions with rough-hewn locals ("great belly-achers who say more with their shoulders than their tongues, and who speak more evil with their gestures than their mouths"), lower-status craftsmen (who labored by *"fantaisie*"), and the king's most marginal subjects ("I oversee four or five thousand of the meanest rogues on

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[122] On Colbert's influential role in Vauban's approach to paperwork, see Michèle Virol, "Les carnets de bord d'un grand serviteur du roi: les agendas de Vauban," *Revue d'histoire moderne et contemporaine (1954-)* 48e, no. 4 (2001): 66-67.

[123] Nicolas's biography emphasized this theme, explaining his appointment to Toulon under Richelieu as part of the Cardinal's attempt to reduce Marseille, which then "had a reputation as a town that was proud of its privileges and little attached to the king's service." One of Nicolas's main challenges as intendant of the galleys was to expand the arsenal of Marseille against the opposition of the town's municipal leaders. Biography of Nicolas Arnoul, BnF NAF 21416, fols. 2-2v; Rambert, *Nicolas Arnoul*.

earth").[124] The work was sometimes distasteful and often overwhelming: Nicolas lamented the necessity of having to "become an investigator [*soliciteur*] when there is someone to punish," and Pierre took meals "over his papers" and had himself transported every night in a litter between Toulon and Marseille in the frantic months following his father's death.[125] Yet the ability of the Arnoul and officials like them to overcome such obstacles and impose a sense of order upon the ports was a precondition of sustained imperial ventures. If the problem of extending European sovereignty to new lands began upon the oceans, we might fairly ask if the construction of early-modern empires originated along metropolitan shores.[126]

By studying the knowledge-producing role of families such as the Arnoul, we can identify changes in administrative culture under the Old Regime without making presentist assumptions about their "modernity." Even as the Arnoul brought new forms of knowledge and power to the state, the family used its position primarily to generate wealth and status for its members within a traditional system of patronage. Successes on both fronts reinforced each other. The Arnouls' frequent "proofs" of loyalty and *caprice* allowed them to build their own local network of allies and dependents, marry into the maritime service elite of Provence, purchase lands in Marseille and the Comté-Venaissin, etch their coat of arms onto the *magasin général*

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[124] N. Arnoul to Colbert, BnF NAF 21307, fols. 26v-27 (Jan. 25, 1667); N. Arnoul to Colbert (Dec. 13, 1670), AN Marine B^6 2, fol. 28, quoted in Zysberg, *Les galériens*, 162.

[125] "Je ne suis point intendant de justice. Je ne le souhaite mesme pas. On a assez de ses peschez, ce n'est pas une chose trop agreable que de conda'ner du monde mais je voy que le service le veult." N. Arnoul to Colbert, BnF NAF 21307, fol. 4 (Jan. 5, 1667). On Pierre becoming overburdened by work, see draft of biography of Pierre Arnoul, BnF NAF 21416, fols. 27v-28; Rambert, "Une aventurière à Marseille et à Toulon au XVIIe siècle, la dame de Rus," *Provincia, bulletin trimestriel de la Société de Statistique d'Histoire et d'Archéologie de Marseille et de Provence* 5 (1925): 14-16; and the letters from Colbert preceding Pierre's disgrace in Clément, *Lettres de Colbert*, III^2: letters of May 1677-Nov. 1679.

[126] Lauren Benton, *A Search for Sovereignty: Law and Geography in European Empires, 1400-1900* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2010): esp. 104-161.

of Toulon, and, most importantly, invest their children back into the service. These achievements in turn created further opportunities to buttress the family's reputation for naval-administrative expertise. The *connaissances* developed by Pierre and (to a lesser extent) Nicolas-François cannot be understood without reference to their apprenticeships, and those apprenticeships make little sense independent of a household strategy that sought ministerial favor, personal gain, and upward mobility through the cultivation of knowledge.

Cultivating knowledge, however, involved more than lessons in shipbuilding, accounting, or mathematics: it also implied the fashioning of a persona. Nicolas's ability to "*s'assujetir*" in swapping arms, "fripperies," and "the worldly air that he had" for a sober life counting royal *deniers* was only the first example of a more general pattern of discipline that reworked the minds, bodies, and habits of young Arnoul men. In learning to police the *moeurs* of convicts and slaves, Pierre and Nicolas-François also were urged to police their own. Successfully honing manners of speech, writing, and self-presentation reinforced Pierre's epistemic standing, while the failure to do so beyond a minimum threshold helped prevent Nicolas-François from establishing a reputation for anything more than unremarkable competence. More specifically, their commitment to the unique demands of administering fleets and ports encouraged them to identify themselves with the trappings of maritime knowledge. Those trappings—paintings and maps, spyglasses, books and instruments—bolstered the family's claims to authority over all affairs relevant to the navy and galleys. In spaces and media ranging from the king's *cabinet* to printed manuals to *conseils de construction*, the Arnoul, like provincial intendants and natural

philosophers of their day, drew on more than reasoned arguments to command trust and respect.[127]

For Pierre, realizing Colbert's ideal of the maritime intendant meant transforming himself into a carpenter, an architect, an engineer, a draftsman, a spy, and an accountant—in Nicolas's words, a *bon marin sur terre*—an assortment of roles that no other royal servant had ever been asked to play. For Nicolas-François, who enjoyed neither his father's guidance nor his brother's reputation nor the exacting protection of Colbert, the family's turn toward the sea meant learning the basics of colonial and maritime affairs within the *cursus honorum* of naval administration that took shape toward the end of the seventeenth century. Taken together, the Arnouls' careers provide a means of humanizing the link between knowledge production and Louis's empire at the moment of its making. By mining the rich body of sources they left behind, we can follow the self-refashioning of a family that took advantage of French overseas ambitions to turn a would-be soldier, a would-be Jesuit, and a would-be captain of the galleys—landsmen all—into three maritime administrators and nearly nine decades of service combined.

[127] Orest Ranum, "Courtesy, Absolutism, and the Rise of the French State, 1630-1660," *Journal of Modern History*, 52 (Sep. 1980): 426-451; Shapin, *A Social History of Truth*; Shapin and Christopher Lawrence, eds., *Science Incarnate: Historical Embodiments of Natural Knowledge* (Chicago and London, 1998).

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Chapter 2. From Paris to the Plantation (and Back): Observing and Interpreting Colonization, c. 1663-c. 1700

"I hope that [this book] will be useful to the Preservation of the French Colonies...Governors will learn by the conduct of those who preceded them, to avoid that which has been the ruin of some, & to practice that which has raised the fortune of others."
- Jean-Baptiste du Tertre, *Histoire générale des Antilles habitées par les françois* (1667)

In 1682, the intendant of the French West Indies, Jean-Baptiste Patoulet, submitted a memorandum to the Navy Ministry enumerating all of the "titles and articles" of the French civil code of 1667 "that are or should be observed in the Islands, those which cannot be, and those which we can modify for the good of the said islands."[1] Around 1684, an unnamed official who had "spent fifteen years in the Islands in the service of the King" produced a "discourse" purporting to survey "the past and present State of the French Islands in America" in order to determine "what should be...enacted there to make them flourish."[2] In 1686, the new intendant at Martinique asked the crown to clarify article 44 of the Black Code, researched by his predecessors and compiled by Colbert, which stipulated that slaves should be included in the community of property between husband and wife like any other moveable good. Did ownership of a slave remain tied to the first marriage under which it was contracted, he wondered, or did it pass to subsequent marriages—so "frequent" in the islands—whose descendants surely would claim right of inheritance? In either case, did the king wish him to enforce the article retroactively? A passage on page 174 of the fifty-fifth chapter of Claude Le Prestre's *Notable*

[1] Jean-Baptiste Patoulet, "Mémoire des titres et articles de l'ordonnance de 1667 qui sont et doibvent estre observez aux Isles, de ceux qui ne le peuvent estre et de ceux ausquels on peut aporter quelque modification pour le bien desdites isles," 3 September 1682, ANOM COL C8B, vol. 1, no. 65.
[2] Unsigned, "Discours sur l'estat passé et présent des isles françoises de l'Amérique et sur ce qu'il seroit du service du roy d'y establir pour leur accroissement," c. 1684, ANOM COL C8B, vol. 1, no. 75.

questions of law suggested that he should not, but the intendant said he would defer to the minister's opinion on the matter.[3]

Each of these writings addressed a common problem: how to bring about a recognizable brand of order, prosperity, and public welfare in colonial settlements where conflict and corruption never seemed far away. Since their very beginnings, the unnamed official complained, the French Antilles had been ruled by "individual *seigneurs* who were also governors, [and] who, properly speaking, behaved like sovereigns." The sad result was that now "each Island had its own different customs" forged by the "passion and interest" of its founding proprietor.[4] Like Patoulet and other administrators who arrived in America in the decade after Louis assumed direct control of his Caribbean colonies, the official proposed a battery of reforms and regulations aimed at bringing the islands under royal authority and establishing the institutions needed to govern them well.

This chapter asks how French officials and their collaborators described colonization, represented its stakes, and pushed for particular ways of achieving it in the first decades of crown rule. The monarchy's growing involvement in overseas expansion in the 1660s and 1670s triggered lively discussion over how its American dominions should be governed. The founding of royal governments and the consolidation of long-distance trading companies inspired a variety of French observers to take stock of their colonial past: what could France learn from previous attempts to settle the New World? Their conclusions ranged widely because their motives were diverse—to enrich themselves, attract patrons, glorify Louis, defeat his

[3] Gabriel Dumaitz de Goimpy to Seignelay, 18 December 1686, ANOM COL C8A, vol. 4, ff. 195-196v.

[4] Unsigned, "Discours sur l'estat passé et présent des isles françoises de l'Amérique," pp. 2-3.

European rivals, or convert African slaves and indigenous peoples, among others. But virtually all of them placed governance at the heart of the question. As one petitioner in New France declared in 1663, "It is not sufficient to have planted colonies. They are bodies which have their birth, their development and their end...They suffer from accidents and disease and have need of remedies. Those who are charged with their administration must continually see to their sustenance, their preservation and their increase."[5] It followed that royal officers, as the king's custodians of colonization, would lead the way in identifying the kind of administration most conducive to its success.

In the pages that follow, I use case studies of three authors—one official and compiler in Paris, one governor of Cayenne, and one Dominican chronicler in the French Antilles—to show how French agents of expansion drew political lessons from the past and present state of the colonies. Esprit de Cabart de Villermont's newsprint and personal archive (1652-1707), Joseph-Antoine LeFebvre de La Barre's pamphlet, *A Description of equinoxial France, formerly called Guyana and by the Spanish, el dorado* (1666), and Father Jean-Baptiste du Tertre's four-volume *General history of the Antilles inhabited by the French* (1667-1671) worked within different genres and conventions, but all of them claimed to know better than others what the true course of colonization was and how it should be advanced. They grounded their claims in what they touted as the most reliable sources available: oral testimony from credible witnesses, privileged access to primary documents, the critical and timely reading of letters, relations, and news from abroad, and their own experience

[5] Unsigned, "L'envoy et l'Etablissement des colonies," 1663, reproduced in Cornelius Jaenen, ed. *The French Regime in the Upper Country of Canada During the Seventeenth Century* (Toronto: Champlain Society, 1996), 34-36.

overseas. In addressing their writings to an audience composed largely of royal officials and other educated elites in the metropole, they explicitly invoked these sources to bolster their own authority and discredit the claims of rival authors (many of whom, like themselves, had been to the colonies and wrote from direct personal experience). Rhetorically speaking, then, their texts remind us that competing visions of colonization were anchored less in the canon of ancient philosophers, Church fathers, and Biblical patriarchs than in competing versions of the "facts" on the ground.[6]

Yet their texts do more than remind us of the interpretive weight contemporaries gave to firsthand knowledge of the colonies: they tell us how authorities on the ground perceived the work of colonization at a formative moment of royal intervention. The authors I examine here had different relationships to the crown, different experiences of the Americas, and different goals in writing. What united them, despite their differences, was a shared conviction that colonies posed unique political problems that demanded solutions all their own—solutions that the king's sovereign gaze and ultimate authority could help to administer. They did not advocate a common body of laws or regulations for the colonies as Pierre Arnoul had done for the fleets and ports of France. Rather, they perceived that the diverse climates, geographies, populations, customs, logistics, privileges, and aims of New World settlements made them too different from the metropole and each other to be ruled exactly alike. Indeed, like other officials and observers of the time, they rarely wrote about the colonies as a collective whole, still less as an "empire." In their

[6] On truth-claims in early European accounts of colonization, see Anthony Pagden, *European Encounters with the New World: From Renaissance to Romanticism* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1993), 51-56.

minds, each one had its own history, its own needs, and its own relationship to France. They sought explicitly to document that history, identify those needs, and define that relationship for the individual settlements or groupings of settlements about which they wrote. In that sense, their writings reveal what historian Christopher Tomlins has called "that aspect of colonizing that consists less in the brute achievement of ascendancy over a colonized 'other' than in developing the conceptual dynamics of one's colonizing."[7] They show us, in other words, how their authors imposed an imagined order on the disorderly realities they perceived (or claimed to perceive) in the colonies.

Why did these authors see the colonies as individual entities distinct from the metropole and each other? What, in their minds, made colonizing the Americas fundamentally different from governing French provinces or conquered territories in Europe? The three case studies in this chapter offer some answers to these questions. The first one uses the contents of Villermont's archive to show how an official of the navy and colonies, residing in Paris, managed to track, record, and interpret the progress of colonization and maritime expansion over the course of several decades. The writings he left behind feature no specific proposals about how the colonies should be governed, but they do reveal how he and his collaborators repackaged the information they received from abroad into authoritative claims about where France's settlements were, what they were like, and why the crown should promote them. The second case examines Governor Joseph-Antoine LeFebvre de La Barre's proposal to

[7] Christopher Tomlins has applied this formulation to colonial laws and charters, and here I argue that it applies as well to the printed texts of administrators and other agents of colonization. Tomlins, "The Legal Cartography of Colonization, the Legal Polyphony of Settlement: English Intrusions on the American Mainland in the Seventeenth Century," *Law & Social Inquiry* 26, no. 2 (Spring 2001): 316.

colonize Guyana. La Barre's pamphlet, adapted from a memorandum he presented to the king, sought to attract investment in the notoriously intractable colony by advancing a vision of orderly and ethical exploitation grounded in the governor's self-proclaimed expertise as a planter. The final case looks at how Tertre brought together eyewitness testimony and official documents to present the history of the French Antilles as a mirror for administrators. By studying the good and bad qualities of past governors, he argued, royal officials could learn how to command the islands in a moral, peaceful, and prosperous fashion.

News Empire: Overseas Reportage and Esprit de Cabart de Villermont's Archive (1652-1707)

In his 1867 dictionary of France's most important historical figures, the naval historian Augustin Jal felt compelled to justify the inclusion of a relative unknown, Esprit de Cabart de Villermont. "Why does M. de Villermont, with whom the biographers have not busied themselves at all, find a place in the list of men famous or obscure, known or unknown, who interest me and to whom I have devoted this Dictionary?," he asked:

> Here is [the answer]: Monsieur de Villermont, because he was tasked by the Court to inform himself about all that occured in France and abroad, [and] even more because he drove himself to know and instruct himself well in things, created connections for himself everywhere, and in all subjects gathered interesting information that he used either for the writing of the *Mercure* [*galant*], or for some manuscript gazettes, or for a great personage at Saint-Germain, Versailles, or Paris.[8]

[8] Augustin Jal, *Dictionnaire critique de biographie et d'histoire* (Paris: Plon, 1867), 1271.

Jal's explanation inspired no biographies, and Villermont has remained marginal to historians ever since.[9] But Jal was right to identify him as a ubiquitous and instrumental presence in his own time. As a royal councilor, he was close to France's leading men of state and well informed of their affairs. His particular interest in the navy and the colonies, coupled with his links to the print trade, brought dozens of merchants, missionaries, naval officers, printers, and gazeteers into his orbit and made him the kingdom's leading broker of overseas news for nearly half a century.

Villermont's archive provides an opportunity to reconstruct the everyday flow of information that wound its way to and from a metropolitan official and promoter of colonies at a time when the crown was sailing more ships, fighting more naval battles, and staking greater claims to goods and territory abroad than ever before. Maritime expansion strained the capacity of administrators to manage the flood of paperwork it generated, creating room for informed advocates of colonization to act as facilitators of state action.[10] The ability of Villermont and his collaborators to gather and digest intelligence from disparate sources allowed them to frame events overseas within

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[9] Villermont has more often been a source for histories of trade, colonization, and the navy than their subject, and when scholars have mentioned him they have usually done so in passing or in their footnotes. He has received some attention as a published primary source. See, for example, the extensive excerpts of his correspondence regarding La Salle's expeditions (see below) in Pierre Margry, *Mémoires et documents pour servir à l'histoire des origines françaises des pays d'outre-mer: Découvertes et établissements des français dans l'ouest et dans le sud de l'Amérique septentrionale (1614-1698)* (Paris: Maisonneuve et Compagnie, 1879), vol. II. Works that make some mention of Cabart as an influential compiler of information and curiosities include Ina Baghdiantz McCabe, *Orientalism in Early Modern France: Eurasian Trade, Exoticism, and the Ancien Régime* (New York: Berg, 2008), 108-112; Grace Lee Nute, *Caesars of the Wilderness: Médard Chouart, Sieur des Groseillers and Pierre Esprit Radisson, 1618-1710* (Saint Paul: Minnesota Historical Society, 2004 ed.; orig. 1943), 159-161, 204, 242-244, 255-256; Rénald Lessard, "La Nouvelle-France comme aventure scientifique. La contribution d'Esprit Cabart de Villermont," *À rayons ouverts*, no. 88 (Winter 2012): 27-29.

[10] See, for example, Daniela Bleichmar, "Books, Bodies, and Fields: Sixteenth-Century Transatlantic Encounters with New World *Materia Medica*," in *Colonial Botany: Science, Commerce, and Politics in the Early Modern World*, eds. Londa Schiebinger and Claudia Swan (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), 83-99.

France's broader pursuit of maritime supremacy, investing those events with grand stakes and assigning each colony a specific role in the drama. Their habitual consumption and production of newsprint reminds us that printed ephemera were a common medium through which French elites imagined and appropriated foreign spaces.[11] More important, the evidence they left behind gives us a rare glimpse into how literate people in the metropole made sense of colonization from a distance and as it unfolded.

Before he became a newsmaker, Villermont gained firsthand experience of the navy and colonies during a well-traveled career in the king's service. In the early 1640s, his father's position as a parlementaire in Paris earned Villermont an appointment as a royal councilor and then as governor of the Îles d'Hyères, where he made connections with the merchants and officers of Toulon and Marseille.[12] Shortly thereafter he sailed to the Caribbean as the king's lieutenant-general at Cayenne, officially to collect rare plants for the royal gardens, unofficially to spy on the Dutch and English slave trades. Again he made contacts, spending the spring of 1646 in Martinique with the d'Aubigné family (whose daughter Françoise, the future royal mistress, became a close friend) before mingling with planter elites at Guadeloupe. His return to Paris around 1648 with tales of New World wonders, numerous exotic goods, and an Antilles-trained cook in tow cemented his reputation in high society as a *curieux* ("curious man") and authority on the Americas.[13]

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[11] Gilbert Chinard, *L'Amérique et le rêve éxotique dans la litterature française au XVIIe et au XVIIIe siècle* (Paris: Hachette, 1913); Geoffroy Atkinson, *Les nouveaux horizons de la Renaissance française* (Paris: Droz, 1935).

[12] Jal, *Dictionnaire critique*, 1271.

[13] Veronica Buckley, *The Secret Wife of Louis XIV: Françoise d'Aubigné, Madame de Maintenon* (London: Macmillan, 2010), 27.

From Paris, *curieux* like Villermont could obtain overseas news in a variety of spaces known to produce it. The city had no precise equivalent to London's Royal Exchange, where English merchants of all trades gathered to share the latest commercial gossip, but for men like Villermont the shops of printers who specialized in travel literature were information entrepôts where trusted seekers could access and discuss manuscripts before they went to press, and of course buy them once they were published.[14] (Gervais Clouzier, who printed Tertre's history, even advertised his business on the île de la Cité with a street sign depicting a *voyageur*.) For the well-connected and influential, news more often came to them. Villermont routinely welcomed naval officials to his apartment on the rue d'Enfer, where they haggled, for instance, over the outfitting of ships destined for New France. When he clashed with René-Robert Cavalier de La Salle over La Salle's expedition to the Gulf of Mexico, Villermont's friend and collaborator, Eusèbe Renaudot, invited him to talk through the fall-out "this very day...I will be at my lodgings until three o'clock, and at the *bibliothèque du Roy* until six, if not I will go to your home after supper tomorrow."[15] As Renaudot's letter attests, the king's library, too, was a place where learned men and royal servants met to discuss foreign lands and even to consult official documents.[16] These spaces, like chambers of commerce and intendants' residences in

[14] See Jean-Baptiste Du Tertre's visit to Gervais Clouzier's shop, mentioned below. Gervais housed his business on the île de la Cité, off the staircase leading up to Saint-Chappelle; his brother François's was located close by, in the Cour du Palais de Justice, near the home of the court's First President.
[15] Renaudot to Cabart de Villermont, c. 1684 (Paris), Library of Congress, BnF Manuscrits français 22799, ff. 78-79v. The officials who met to discuss ships bound for Canada were Abraham Du Quesne, *lieutenent-général* of the king's navy, Nicolas Denys, governor of Acadia, and an ensign named de Granges. Cabart de Villermont to Denys *fils*, 10 April 1680 (Paris), LOC BnF Mss. fr. 22799, f. 46.
[16] The *bibliothèque du Roi* sometimes served as a research center for active officials, such as Pierre de Girardin, who in 1685 hired copyists to hunt down and transcribe the official treaties and correspondence of his predecessors in preparation for his new post as ambassador at Constantinople.

the ports, hosted a regular spoken dialogue about the fleets, colonies, and maritime trade of which written sources offer only a partial glimpse.[17]

In addition to these face-to-face communications, Villermont maintained a vast web of correspondence that stretched across Europe, the Mediterranean, and the Americas. He exchanged a steady stream of letters with informants in Paris, Toulon, Marseille, Rochefort, La Rochelle, Rome, Québec, Michillimackinac, Basseterre, Fort Saint-Pierre, the Levant, and elsewhere, some of whom provided him with copies of third-party dispatches that extended his reach even further. His web was dense, too: during the 1680s, his contacts in North America alone included the soldier-explorers Henri de Tonty and Pierre Le Moyne d'Iberville, the naval captain Le Gallois de Beaujeu, Governor of New France Louis de Buade de Frontenac, the naval commissioner Philippe Gaultier de Comporté, the former Jesuit superior Thierry Beschefer, the Illinois missionary Jacques Gravier, Governor of Acadia Nicolas Denys and his son, and the Montréal merchant and agent of the colony's fur monopoly in Paris, Denis Riverin.[18] Their reports ranged widely, but virtually all of them contained updates on the state of the ports and colonial settlements. Some correspondents also sent him Native goods and wildlife specimens for his famously comprehensive cabinet of curiosities.[19] The breadth and depth of Villermont's

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John-Paul Ghobrial, *The Whispers of Cities: Information Flows in Istanbul, London, and Paris in the Age of William Trumbull* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2013), 61-64.

[17] See, for example, the allusions to this dialogue sprinkled throughout the Bégon-Villermont correspondence cited below.

[18] For Villermont's correspondence, see LOC BnF Mss. fr. 22799-22815. The Library of Congress's collection contains only copies of his papers relevant to the Americas and to French activities overseas. His full, original archive is housed at the BnF.

[19] In the mid-1680s, Villermont and his son received several boxes of Caribbean tools and specimens sent by a planter and evangelist at Guadeloupe, Chasteau du Bois, who hoped that Cabart would pass along some of them to the King's Gardener: "Presque toutes les graines et semences cy dessus viendroient a versailles dans le Potager et le Roy auroit peut estre du plaisir de voir une partie des

network was second only to that of the minister of the navy and possibly the intendant of Rochefort—indeed, they shared many of the same contacts—and at any given time he was nearly as well informed of events in the colonies as the minister himself.[20] His influence within the services was great enough that intendants and ministers sent him ministry paperwork, solicited him to recommend candidates for appointment, and asked him to connect members of his network whose collaboration would speed their work.[21]

Villermont was an active informee, and he used his correspondents not only to keep abreast of developments abroad but also to corroborate accounts he had heard from travelers or read in the "six or seven hundred volumes of voyages" housed in his library.[22] In 1671, for instance, he gave a questionnaire to the French merchant and orientalist Jean Chardin before Chardin's departure for Persia, India, and China that posed 107 queries about the Far East. "[Find out] what Troa is," he asked, "its virtues

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Jardins de son Potager occupée des plantes estrangeres, et des fruits Bizarres et inconnus en france. Mr. de la Quintinie qui est de vos amis s'en feroit de l'honneur avec un peu de soin et je continuerois de vous envoyer pour luy de nouvelles curiositez, si l'essay que je vous envoye en estoit bien receu, toujours servira-t-il a Joindre aux Raretez de vostre Cabinet." Chasteau du Bois to Cabart de Villermont, undated (c. 1685), LOC BnF Mss. fr. 22799, ff. 275-277. Beschefer shipped him dishes made of bark, watermelon seeds, local minerals, and Indian-made goods. Beschefer to Cabart de Villermont, 22 October 1687, summarized in *The Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents*, ed. Reuben G. Thwaites (Cleveland: Burrows Brothers, 1899), vol. LXIV: 22-23. Michel Begon, lacking news to share from his intendancy at Rochefort, once sent Cabart an inventory of his own sizeable collection of oddities from Canada, asking him to "Mandez moy s'il vous plaist votre sentiment sur ce que vous jugéz a propos que je fasse venir l'année prochaine a fin qu'il ne manque rien dans mon cabinet aux curiosités qu'on peut tirer de ce pays la." Begon to Cabart de Villermont, 9 January 1689 (Rochefort), LOC BnF Mss. fr. 22799, ff. 186-187v.

[20] The letters sent to him were noticeably, but not substantially, less extensive and exact than those received by the Colbert or the Pontchartrain, and they were not screened or summarized for him by clerks.

[21] "Extrait de la relations des Avantures, et voyages de Mathieu Sageau," 1701, in Recueil de pièces, mss. et imprimées, sur l'histoire d'Amérique, formé par le P. Léonard de Ste-Catherine de Sienne, Augustin déchaussé, BnF Mss. fr. 9097, f. 119 (margin note); Bégon to Cabart de Villermont, 1 January 1700 and 16 June 1701, reproduced in Louis Delavaud, *Archives historiques de Saintonge et de l'Aunis*, T. I (1925): 48, 68; Cabart de Villermont to Denys *fils*, 10 April 1680, LOC BnF Mss. fr. 22799, f. 46.

[22] Obituary of Cabart de Villermont, *Mercure de France*, no. 10 (1707), 299.

and its use, and if it is true, as [Jean Hugues de] Linschot, [François] Pirard, and various other authors who escape my memory say, [that] whoever receives a certain dose in his drink or food loses consciousness for 24 hours." He encouraged Chardin to learn what he could about Hyacinthe, "a smelly root from Tartary...common in Turkey and in Persia in the time when Pietro Della Valle was there, who says in the 18th letter of his 1st volume that it was employed successfully...in perfumes." Villermont also wanted to verify the word of a "Mr. Hoquenou" about the state of the Dutch catechu trade with Japan, assertions made by the voyager Jean-Baptiste Tavernier about medicine men who could hatch eggs from the earth and conjure fruit-bearing trees, and rumors that time spent in the Indies caused European women to stop menstruating and European dogs to lose their bark.[23] The array of questions he posed reflected his position as a voracious consumer of secondhand information who depended upon eyewitnesses to authenticate the many curious, surprising, or useful reports he received.

Villermont did more than collect and compare information: he also curated it for future reference. His approach to gazettes was especially meticulous. Printed periodicals offering news from a particular city or state were a recent import to France—the earliest domestic one, Renaudot's *Gazette de France*, debuted in 1631—but for Villermont and other readers across Europe they were already a fixture of

[23] Cabart gave Chardin this questionnaire either on his own initiative or at the behest of the Compagnie des Indes orientales (the details are murky). McCabe, *Du bon usage du thé*, 165-178. For other interpretations of their exchange, see McCabe, *Orientalism in Early Modern France*, 108-112; Ghobrial, *The Whispers of Cities*, 19-22. The works to which Villermont alluded were François Pyrard de Laval, *Voyage de François Pyrard de Laval contenant sa navigation aux Indes orientales, Maldives, Moluques, et au Brésil* (Paris: Thiboust, 1619); Jan Huygen van Linschoten, *Histoire de la navigation de Jean Hugues de Linschot, Hollandois, aux Indes orientales* (Amsterdam: Pierre, 1610); Pietro Della Valle, *Viaggi di Pietro della Valle il Pellegrino* (Rome: Mascaradi, 1650-1658).

communications alongside letters, broadsheets, and scribal *nouvelles à la main*.[24] Between 1659 and 1681 he kept yearly extracts of scribal and printed reports relevant to French activities overseas.[25] His excerpts were dry tidbits of information, usually one to three lines long, from sites as disparate as Perpignan, Port de Vaudrer, Marseille, Toulon, Livorno, Genoa, Naples, Civitavecchia, Paris, Dunkirk, Brest, and Saint Christopher, to name just the places of origin he listed for 1680 and 1681. Over time his record-keeping became more sophisticated: in the first year he made only a few entries into a single, undifferentiated column; as France's maritime presence grew, so did the number of his entries, and eventually he organized them by location, assigning each extract a date and reference number that would allow him to recover the original source, if necessary.[26] His references corresponded to individual pages of gazettes that he grouped by year in chronological order. Given that by the end of each year these numbers reached into the high hundreds or low thousands for a mere four to thirty-six entries, he appears to have been sifting a very large total of pages for a very specific subset of information.[27]

What was he learning? Most of Villermont's extracts detailed the movements of ships, personnel changes within the services, and the outcomes of naval battles and skirmishes. He also noted the departures of missionaries and colonizing expeditions,

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[24] Eugène Hatin, *Les gazettes de Hollande et la presse clandestine aux XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles* (Paris: Pincebourde, 1865), 16; Ghobrial, *Whispers of Cities*, 26-27, 30.

[25] LOC BnF Mss. fr. 22768, ff. 35-81v. Extracts for the years 1676 and 1678 either are lost or were not recorded by Cabart.

[26] For example, "Brest: A flute from the squadron of the Comte d'Estrées has reported that since its departure from Martinique, he has anchored in the harbor of St. Domingue. 25 October 1680. ^579." LOC BnF Mss. fr. 22768, f. 75v. Occasionally he added marginalia such as labels, corrections, or updates to help himself track developments over time and improve the accuracy of his notes.

[27] The numbers turned over at the beginning of each new year, presumably beginning at 1 for the first page of the first gazette of January (or occasionally the last gazette of the previous December) and continuing upward as high as 1300 (to cite the highest of any year) by the final entry of December.

the arrival of exotic merchandise at French ports, proclamations of commercial ordinances, and landmark occasions such as the inaugural meeting of the king's Conseil du Commerce in August 1665.[28] The vast majority of his entries (270 out of 421, or 64%) focused on the Mediterranean, where French fleets were engaged in near-constant warfare with Barbary corsairs and rival European powers; the Ponant (102 entries, or 24%) received far less attention, while the colonies (29 entries, or 7%) barely rated.[29] These figures reflected the Mediterranean's status as the chief theater of operations for the navy and galleys during this period, as well as a bias in Villermont's sources: most of his gazettes came from Italy and Provence, and the American colonies, which had no presses of their own, depended entirely upon letters and word of mouth to disseminate their news. Despite the imbalance of coverage, his systematic culling of published reports buttressed the information he gleaned from conversation and correspondence to give him a firm grasp of events overseas as they unfolded across a variety of theaters—not only in the present, but also in a recorded past that he could access at his leisure.

Villermont differed from the ministers and intendants of his day in that he made it a priority to broadcast the contents of his archive to others.[30] A case in point

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[28] See for example LOC BnF Mss. fr. 22768, f. 39v (arrival of whale oil at Havre via Compagnie du Nord and royal ordinances restricting its sale), f. 41v (departure of troops destined to combat "les sauvages" of Canada), f. 46 (Conseil du Commerce), f. 57 (Colbert named head of Compagnie des Indes orientales).

[29] Most of the extracts concerning the colonies and the Ponant coincided with the Second Anglo-Dutch War (1665-1667), which was fought mainly in the Caribbean and along France's Atlantic coast. The remainder of Villermont's entries (20, or 5%) described events that cannot be assigned to a specific locale. On the imbalance of coverage between the New World and the Orient in European gazettes, which continued throughout the eighteenth century, see Pierre Rétat, ed., *La Gazette d'Amsterdam: Miroir de l'Europe au XVIIIe siècle* (Oxford, UK: Voltaire Foundation, 2001), 240-259.

[30] A notable contrast being Colbert, who jealously guarded the contents of his "secret state intelligence system." Soll, *Information Master*. See also the impulse toward discretion expressed by Pontchartrain and Bégon further on in this chapter.

is his unfinished history of the navy under Louis XIV. The didactic tone of his manuscript suggests that he aimed to introduce readers to the institutional origins of France's recent naval renaissance. "The Navy was profoundly neglected by Monsieur Le Cardinal de Mazarin," he began. "The King was not content to restore it to the state in which it had once been, but [rather], under the ministries of Monsieur Colbert and Monsieur de Seignelay his son, he carried it further than it had been [taken] under any of the Kings who preceded him. We shall speak first of the Marine as it concerns ships [of the line], and then of it as it concerns the Galleys..." There followed an exhaustive series of lists: of the classes of vessels and their respective armaments and crew sizes; of officers' ranks from admiral to ensign; of the evolution of each post since the king's reform of the services in 1669; of every officer who had served in the fifteen years since, where, when, and at what salary; of their respective families and titles; and of the bureau's administrative jurisdictions, complete with the ports and officers attached to them.[31] In short, he distilled the substance of his archive into a thorough institutional portrait of the navy intended for public consumption. The extensive information he could wield about naval personnel rivaled anything contained in the ministry's dossiers; his ability to harness it toward a singular purpose may well have surpassed the minister's own.[32]

Villermont never completed his history, but, as Jal noted, he had at his disposal a faster and more routine medium for broadcasting his information to others: printed gazettes. His primary contacts in the periodical trade were Renaudot and

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[31] Untitled manuscript, c. 1684, LOC BnF Mss. fr. 22768, ff. 81-236.

[32] The Marine's archives did not take their current shape until the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. In the seventeenth century, their contents were scattered among the papers of individual intendants, ministers' libraries, and the *Bibliothèque du Roi*. See Archives nationales, *État général des fonds*, vol. III: Fonds de la Marine, preface.

Father Claude Bernou, who, like Villermont, was a frequent contributor to *La Gazette* and the monthly *Mercure galant*, which ostensibly printed only court gossip and literary criticism but also featured lengthy dispatches from abroad. All three men were ardent champions of colonization with close ties to the ministry. Bernou, who advised the minister on Spanish and Portuguese claims in the New World, had once held a position in the service himself, wrote petitions on behalf of explorers and traders like La Salle and Pierre-Esprit Radisson, and together with Renaudot formed part of a circle that lobbied Seignelay in support of colonial ventures.[33] With the help of their contacts, the trio monopolized official newsprint about the navy and colonies for nearly four decades.[34] The individual articles that they researched and wrote were rarely signed, but the men's correspondence with each other sometimes reveals which reports were authored by whom.[35] Villermont almost certainly provided the bulk of their naval content, which included material seemingly drawn straight from his lists, such as a "General state of the officers of the Marine who are presently in the King's Service" published by the *Mercure* in May of 1684.[36]

The print culture in which Villermont operated was censored, monopolistic, and aimed toward a small group of readers in Paris and the provinces. The primary

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[33] This circle also included the cartographer and royal librarian Melchisédich Thévenot and the future governors of Saint-Domingue and New France Pierre de Cussy and Louis-Hector de Callières; the members sometimes referred to themselves as the Société de la Rue Victoire, after the street where the minister kept his offices. Germaine Warkentin, *Pierre-Esprit Radisson: The Collected Writings*, vol. I: The Voyages (Montréal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2012), 69-70. On Bernou's contributions as a gazeteer, see Gilles Feyel, "Claude BERNOU (1638?-1716)," in *Dictionnaire des journalistes*, URL: http://dictionnaire-journalistes.gazettes18e.fr/journaliste/065-claude-bernou.

[34] Harcourt Brown, "History and the Learned Journal," *Journal of the History of Ideas*, vol. 33, no. 3 (July-September 1972): 366-367.

[35] See his correspondence with Bernou and Renaudot, examined below.

[36] "General state of the officers of the Marine who are presently in the King's Service," *Mercure galant*, May 1684: 130-160; "Listes exactes des promotions de Marine," *Mercure galant*, December 1695: 172-190.

publication for which he wrote and gathered news, *La Gazette*, essentially served as a royal mouthpiece. Its editor, Eusèbe Renaudot, maintained the exclusive privilege of printing political news within the kingdom in return for discreet and favorable coverage of the crown. His readership grew steadily during the final decades of the seventeenth century: between 1683 and 1699, *La Gazette* expanded beyond Paris, Bordeaux, Lyon, and La Rochelle to include franchised editions in sixteen more towns, and between 1670 and 1700 circulation more than doubled, from 4,000 weekly copies to roughly 9,000. These figures compare unfavorably with more robust markets for gazettes in England and the Netherlands, but Renaudot and Villermont targeted a more exclusive audience of magistrates, merchants, financiers, foreign emissaries, and others who moved within the sphere of officialdom or stood at just one or two removes from it.[37]

Their newsprint provided an account of affairs abroad that administrators on the ground consumed alongside correspondence, word of mouth, and foreign gazettes.[38] Periodicals arrived annually at Québec and probably reached the Antilles throughout the year.[39] In covering the latest movements of fleets and personnel, they

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[37] For circulation figures and the market for newsprint in louis-quatorzian France, see Andrew Pettegree, *The Invention of News: How the World Came to Know about Itself* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2014), 231-236. On the nature of the "public sphere" and state-sanctioned print culture in France, see Pettegree, *The French Book and the European Book World* (Leiden: Brill, 2007); Adrian Johns, *The Nature of the Book: Print and Knowledge in the Making* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998).

[38] "Inventaire après décès du bailli de Poincy, lieutenant général aux Iles d'Amérique," 12 April 1660, ANOM COL C^{8B} 1, no. 6; Dubé, "Les intendants de la Nouvelle-France et la République des Lettres,": 42; For Arnoul's "gazettes de bruxelles," see BnF NAF 21403, fol. 225v (May 1683); Vaucresson to Vitalis, 18 October 1702, in BnF NAF 21410, ff. 266-267v.

[39] Gazettes began to reach Canada as early as the mid-1630s. In his *Relation* of 1636, Paul Le Jeune observed of Québec, "The din of Palaces, the great uproar of Lawyers, Litigants, and Solicitors is heard here only at a thousand leagues' distance. Exactions, deceits, thefts, rapes, assassinations, treachery, enmity, black malice, are seen here only once a year, in the letters and Gazettes which people bring from Old France." *The Jesuits Relations and Allied Documents*, ed. Reuben G. Thwaites, vol. IX (Cleveland: Burrows Brothers, 1898), 138. Also see Antoine Roy, "Ce qu'ils lisaient," *Cahiers*

introduced royal officers to readers and each other, creating an ongoing directory of who was serving where and with what sort of distinction.[40] Their reports helped meet the insatiable demand for news expressed by nearly every official in his letters, supplementing individual webs of correspondence with a common record through which far-flung readers could follow people and events elsewhere in Europe, the New World, and beyond.

Villermont, Renaudot, and Bernou were uniquely well equipped to meet that demand not only because of their ample knowledge of the *outre-mer*, but also because their willingness to censor themselves or spin their reports ensured them privileged access to the state's own intelligence. Leading figures in government and even the king himself read the *Gazette*, fretted over its content, and employed whenever possible a mix of coercion and collaboration to shape its reporting in ways favorable to the crown. Their concern extended to the navy and colonies. Navy Minister Jérôme Phélypeaux de Pontchartrain once admonished Renaudot:

> I found in your latest Gazette a long article on Martinique and the return of some fugitive savages and slaves of St Vincent...as there often can be things in the circumstances you detail of which the public should not be so well informed, you must not include anything in your Gazettes concerning the Marine that I have not seen. I take special care, for my part, to send you all that

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de Dix, vol. 20 (1955): 212-213. The warmer waters of the Caribbean allowed ships from France to come and go year-round, which would have permitted more frequent deliveries.

[40] Loyal readers of the *Gazette* would have been able to track the achievements of the *chef d'escadre* d'Amblimont, for example, who received coverage for participating in battles off Martinique and Texel (20 December 1674 and 13 August 1689), earning promotion to *commandeur de Saint Louis* (16 May 1693), and ascending to the governorship of Martinique (18 August 1696); his son, whose own distinguished career spanned most of the eighteenth century, appeared in its pages nine times. Michel Vergé-Franceschi, *Les chefs d'escadre marquis d'Amblimont (1663-1797)* (Jonzac: l'Université Francophone d'Été, 1994), 29.

> comes to me when nothing prevents me from giving it to you.[41]

Despite their attempts at surveillance, ministers could not always control what French periodicals reported, but they did seek to co-opt them by selectively feeding their authors information they deemed suitable for publication, creating a direct pipeline that made the *Gazette* in particular "the principal center in France for the dissemination of news"—especially the news from abroad that Renaudot favored.[42]

The trio's coverage fed readers a regular, wide-ranging, and triumphalist account of French expansion. Amid the more frequent news of marriages and monstrous births and diplomatic manoeuvres, news of the French in America appeared forty-seven times in the monthly *Mercure* between 1678 and 1700 and seventy-six times in the weekly *Gazette* in eight sample years during the same period; in most years they accounted for one or two reports in the *Mercure* and seven to ten in the *Gazette*.[43] In general, the *Gazette* hewed to the terse style of Villermont's extracts, tracking the movements of men and ships, but it sometimes published treaties, royal ordinances, and firsthand accounts of battles and voyages, often with commentary that invested their contents with broader strategic stakes. "The complete destruction of the Colonies & Magazines of Cayenne, Ouyapogue, Apraouage, Tobago, & the Island of Gorée by the Comte d'Estrées," concluded one typical

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[41] Pontchartrain to Renaudot, 25 February 1708, ANOM MAR B 31, f. 28. For more on press censorship, including comments regarding the *Gazette* made by leading men of state such as Richelieu, Vauban, Louvois, Colbert, Pontchartrain, and Colbert de Torcy, see Pierre-François Burger, "Eusèbe RENAUDOT (1648-1720)," in *Dictionnaire des journalistes*, URL: http://dictionnaire-journalistes.gazettes18e.fr/journaliste/676-eusebe-renaudot.

[42] Brown, "History and the Learned Journal": 366.

[43] These figures do not include reports concerning the activities of other European navies or colonies unless the French were explicitly involved. The *Mercure* began operations in 1679, one year after Eusèbe Renaudot assumed direct control of the *Gazette*—formerly run by his father—which explains the start dates of my samples. In the *Gazette*'s case, I chose the years 1678, 1681, 1684, 1687, 1690, 1693, 1696, and 1699.

account, "costs [the Dutch] more than 5 millions, dashes their hopes, secures and improves our Trade, leaves us twelve hundred Prisoners, & carries the terror of the King's Arms & Maritime power to America, while his Ships and Galleys remain masters of the Mediterranean."[44] The *Mercure* offered more in-depth reportage that consistently padded news from the colonies with details about their history and government. It also reviewed the latest maps and travel literature for sale in Paris, explained what colonial terms such as *boucaniers* and *créoles* meant, announced promotions and honors within the maritime services, ran verses praising Louis's conquest of the four corners of the globe, and eulogized the conduct of dead officers.[45] In all of these ways the gazettes placed France at the center of an unfolding overseas drama whose missionary, merchant, and military protagonists were winning on all fronts against "barbaric" Indians and perfidious European rivals.

In setting the scenes of that drama, the gazettes provided individualized descriptions of the colonies. They padded their reports from each colony with reminders of when France had claimed it, where it was located, what it produced, what sort of peoples inhabited it, and what its continued possession would do for the kingdom's commerce, religion, and military might. Readers could learn, for instance, that the recapture of slave factories on the Gold Coast would buoy trade with the

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[44] "Relation de la prise des Isles de Gorée au Cap-Vert & de Tabago, dans l'Amérique, sur les Hollandois...," *La Gazette*, no. 19 (25 February 1678): 148.

[45] The main themes of the *Mercure*'s stories break down as follows: warfare/navy (23), personnel (8), nature/curiosities (6), geography/exploration (4), verses celebrating empire (3), piracy (2), and royal trading companies (1), missions (1). For book and map reviews, see *Mercure galant*, no. 2 (February 1697): 249-250 and no. 5 (May 1698): 253-254; for explanations of *boucaniers* and *créoles*, see "Histoire des Boucaniers ou Flibustiers," no. 9 (September 1686): 171-185 and no. 4 (April 1683): 209; for promotions and honors, see "Noms, surnoms, et qualités de tous les Chevaliers de l'Ordre de la derniere promotion," no. 1 (January 1689): 219-251; for verses, see "Vers sur la fonction des deux Mers," no. 9 (September 1681): 9-10; eulogies and death notices of colonial personnel and their relations are in no. 4 (April 1692): 30, no. 3 (March 1685): 158-159, and no. 10 (October 1707): 296-299.

Antilles, where African captives were "indispensably necessary to the planting of the land"; that Martinique's defense was critical because of its status as the most populous of the islands and the center of their governance; that Saint Domingue was an undercultivated nest of pirates, whereas Guadeloupe abounded in sugar, tobacco, and sea turtle meat; that Cayenne's strategic position along the South American mainland made it both valuable to French provisioning and vulnerable to English, Dutch, and Portuguese invaders; and that Canada's riverine trade in furs depended upon Native allies in the Great Lakes country who met with the governor annually and shared France's Iroquois enemy.[46] In investing each colony with a character all its own, the gazettes echoed the impression filtering back to Versailles in administrative reportage, whose authors focused consistently on the local affairs for which they were responsible rather than events occuring elsewhere in the Americas.[47]

To modern eyes, Villermont's news archive and the reports of the periodical press project an orderly image of overseas information collection and dissemination, but his personal communications with Renaudot and Bernou reveal a messier and less rational process of reportage. Their correspondence surrounding La Salle's final expedition to the Gulf of Mexico in 1684-1687 provides a case in point. In the years preceding La Salle's departure, all three men were in contact with the explorer and each other—Villermont and Renaudot from Paris, Bernou from Paris and Rome, and La Salle from Paris, Rochefort, and America—creating a tidy communication circuit

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[46] *Mercure galant*, no. 6 (June 1694): 31-49 (factories); no. 6 (June 1688): 279-280 and no. 7 (July 1693): 252-267 (Martinique); *Gazette*, no. 82 (31 July 1678): 731 and "Histoire des Boucaniers ou Flibustiers," *Mercure galant*, no. 9 (1686): 171-173.

[47] This administrative preoccupation with the local was reflected not only in the content of reports, but also in the way they were processed and preserved by the ministry, which began to assign particular clerks and files to each colony during these years. See the personnel assignments and institutional histories compiled by the ministry later in the eighteenth century, in AN MAR C, vols. 120-121.

that nonetheless broke down in June of 1684 when La Salle became convinced that Villermont was plotting with the Jesuits and his co-commander, the naval captain Beaujeu, to ruin him. Villermont not only met with Renaudot and Bernou to discuss the fallout in person, he also turned to Beaujeu for speculation about the secretive La Salle's intentions for the voyage, which he then passed on to Renaudot and Bernou against Beaujeu's wishes.[48] When yet another indiscretion exposed their correspondence to La Salle, Beaujeu reproached Villermont:

> Yesterday M. de La Salle showed me a letter from M. l'abbé Renaudeau informing him that I write to you all that occurs here and numerous conjectures about our voyage, which you show to everyone. I asked you to burn my letters about that, [and] I cannot help saying that I am angry with you, not because you make known my secrets, but because you show my letters which are scattered and sent off without my even reading over them...[but] do me the favor of showing them to this abbé [Renaudot], so that he will learn not to count conjectures upon conjectures as truth...M. de la Salle not having told me his secret, though M. de Seignelay ordered him to tell me, I am not obliged to keep it, and I am allowed as much as anybody, I believe, to make my conjectures on what I read about it in the *Gazette de Hollande*.[49]

Beaujeu was less upset by Villermont's betrayal of his confidence than by what Renaudot might do with his "conjectures upon conjectures"—namely, that he would represent them to others as fact. (The risk of publication was high: not only was the

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[48] La Salle, a fervent anti-Jesuit, suspected Beaujeu because Madame Beaujeu had ties to the order; he suspected Villermont by extension because Villermont was close to the Beaujeu. Beaujeu to Cabart de Villermont, 10 July 1684 (La Rochelle), reproduced in Margry, *Mémoires et documents*, 451. For Villermont's meeting with Renaudot, see the encounter cited above. For his attempts to meet with Bernou, see Cabart de Villermont to Bernou and Bernou's same-day response, 7 July 1684, LOC BnF Mss. fr. 22799, f. 164. Beaujeu's request that Villermont not show anyone his letters, which he (rightly) feared would damage his relations with La Salle beyond repair, is in Beaujeu to Cabart de Villermont, June 1684 (La Rochelle), printed in Pierre Margry, *Mémoires et documents*, vol II, 426.

[49] Beaujeu to Cabart de Villermont, 29 June 1684 (Rochefort), reproduced in Margry, *Mémoires et documents*, vol. II, 440-442.

expedition being covered extensively by the *Gazette de Hollande*, but the *Mercure* had just run a fawning report on La Salle's previous voyage, and Beaujeu knew that Renaudot was already touting the explorer in private as a French Cortez, Pizarro, or Almagro.[50]) Nonetheless, the captain continued to feed Villermont news and to request it in return, even asking him for details of the expedition that might be swirling in Paris.[51] Now firmly excluded from La Salle's trust himself, he depended as much upon Villermont and printed periodicals for information, despite being at the center of events, as Villermont depended upon him.

Villermont's wide-ranging, sometimes messy activities as a collector and interpreter of overseas news and objects make us question assumptions about how officials of the Old Regime state learned about their empire at the moment of its making. Historians of communications and empire typically depict information as something produced by correspondence "networks," news "flows," and bureaucratic "machinery." While it is understood that these abstractions were grounded in the everyday actions of individual people, we do not often see their labors up close or in their full compexity.[52] What we lose in the process is an awareness that their

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[50] *Mercure galant*, May 1684; Beaujeu to Cabart de Villermont, 29 June 1684, in Margry, *Mémoires et documents*, vol. II, 442. As Villermont (among others) became disillusioned with La Salle, Bernou rose to the explorer's defense, arguing that La Salle did not deserve the opprobrium heaped upon him and might one day be rehabilitated in the public mind much as Cortez had been. Bernou to Cabart de Villermont, 11 September 1685 (Rome), LOC BnF Mss. fr. 22799, ff. 71-71v.

[51] Beaujeu to Cabart de Villermont, 21 May 1684 (Rochefort), LOC BnF Mss. fr. 22799, ff. 143-144v.

[52] Such a tendency goes back at least as far as Harold Innis's pioneering study of the problem, *Empire and Communications* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1950). For examples of recent or influential scholarship on the problem in early modern France and England, see Ian K. Steele, *The English Atlantic 1675-1740. An exploration of communications and community* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986); Kenneth Banks, *Chasing Empire Across the Sea: Communications and the State in the French Atlantic, 1713-1763* (Montréal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2002); James McClellan III and François Regourd, *The Colonial Machine: French Science and Overseas Expansion in the Old Regime* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2011); John-Paul Ghobrial, *The Whispers of Cities: Information Flows in Istanbul, London, and Paris in the Age of William Trumbull* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2013); and on the modern period, C. A. Bayly, *Empire and Information:*

activities frequently transcended our own neat conceptual boundaries between oral, scribal, and print cultures; texts, images, and material artifacts; "scientific" and political knowledge; and metropole and colony. If we want to find broader patterns in the ways that premodern states produced knowledge about the overseas world, we first have to ask how individuals like Villermont made sense of the exotic 'stuff' they confronted in their own settings and according to their own motives.[53]

Governing Guyana: Joseph-Antoine Lefebvre de La Barre, Chorography, and Estate Management

In September 1665, the governor of the newly-founded colony of France équinoxiale, or Cayenne, Joseph-Antoine Lefebvre de La Barre, returned from America to Paris and met with the king. After hearing "all that I had done for the glory of the French name and the augmentation of his monarchy," which included retaking Cayenne from the Dutch and establishing a new settlement, Louis asked La Barre to produce an updated map of Guyana with a written explanation of the country (Figure 1). A few months later the governor published both, in a pamphlet entitled *A Description of equinoxial France, formerly called Guyana and by the Spanish, el dorado*.[54] He had ample incentive to make its contents public: the recently-formed

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Intelligence Gathering and Social Communication in India, 1780-1870 (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1996). For a critique of the "network" model (and a defense of "flows"), see Ghobrial, *Whispers*, preface; for a critique of the "machine" model, see Paul Cheney and Loïc Charles, "The Colonial Machine Dismantled: Knowledge and Empire in the French Atlantic," *Past & Present*, no. 219 (May 2013): 127-163.

[53] On the importance of individual reading and note-taking to the construction of knowledge about the material world during this period, see Deborah Harkness, "Clement Draper's Prison Notebooks: Reading, Writing, and Doing Science," in *The Jewel House: Elizabethan London and the Scientific Revolution* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), 181-210.

[54] Joseph-Antoine Lefebvre de La Barre, *Description de la France equinoctiale, cy-devant appellee Guyanne et par les espagnols, el dorado. Nouvellement remise sous l'obeissance du Roy, par le Sieur Le Febvre de la Barre, son Lieutenant General dans ce Païs. Avec la carte d'iceluy, faite et presentee à Sa Majesté par ledit Sieur De la Barre. Et un discourse tres-utile et necessaire pour Ceux qui*

West Indies Company had just absorbed his old venture, the Company of Cayenne, and he was under pressure to recruit more colonists and investors to make its grand commercial ambitions a reality.

In the centuries since, neither La Barre nor his pamphlet has received much scholarly notice. The *Description* figures among several pieces of early French colonial propaganda studied mainly for their literary merit or their impact on migration.[55] As for La Barre, his contemporaries thought little of him both as an officer and as a man, and historians have been no kinder to his memory. His sudden withdrawal from a promising career in Paris as a parlementaire and master of requests for a tour as intendant in the provinces aroused suspicions of scandal.[56] Colbert and Cardinal Mazarin found him woefully incapable as an administrator.[57] When he took

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voudront établir des Colonies en ces Contrées; Qui les détrompera des Impostures dont tous Ceux qui en ont parlé ont remply leurs Ecrits; Et leur sera connoistre la force, le nombre, & le naturel des Indiens de cette Coste, & ce qu'elle peut produire d'avantageux pour le Commerce de l'Europe (Paris: Jean Ribou, 1666), 3, 8-10.

[55] Gabriel Debien and Marcel Châtillon, "La propagande imprimée pour les Antilles et la Guyane au XVIIe siècle: récrutement ou racolage?," *Annales des Antilles*, no. 24 (1981): 79-82; Philip Boucher, "French Proprietary Colonies in the Greater Caribbean, 1620s-1670s," in *Constructing Early Modern Empires: Proprietary Ventures in the Atlantic World, 1500-1750*, eds. L. H. Roper and B. Van Ruymbeke (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2007), 176-177.

[56] Marc Chassaigne, "Un maître des requêtes lieutenant-général des armées du roi: M. de la Barre aux Antilles," *Revue des études historiques* (1920): 322.

[57] In October 1659, following a tour of inspection in Nivernais, where La Barre was serving as intendant, Colbert wrote Mazarin, "Je suis à présent dans la visite du duché de Nivernais...M. de la Barre, intendant, n'est point un instrument propre pour m'en servir comme il est nécessaire, pouvant assurer Votre Éminence que jamais homme n'a été tant haï des peuples et n'a donné aux peuples tant de véritables raisons de le haïr que celui-là, par une conduite tout à fait abandonnée...Il faut commencer par leur ôter cet intendant et leur donner un plus homme de bien que lui"; Mazarin replied, "J'ai déjà écrit à M. Le Tellier [La Barre's patron] de prendre au mot M. de la Barre s'il est vrai qu'il ait demandé son congé. Et si cela n'est pas, en arrivant à Toulouse, je verrai ce qui se pourra faire, car je juge absolument nécessaire qu'il soit changé ; et ce n'est pas de cette heure que j'ai eu cette pensée, n'en ayant pas entendu bien parler en aucun temps," quoted in Regis Roy, "Joseph-Antoine Lefebvre, sieur de La Barre, gouverneur de la Nouvelle-France en 1682," *Bulletin des recherches historiques* 20 (1914): 48. Charles Colbert de Terron, intendant of Rochefort, a director of the Company of Cayenne, and Jean-Baptiste's cousin, wrote after meeting La Barre that he "did not appear to me fit to command other men, and it is surely on his end that we have the most to fear, but with the precautions we have taken by means of [lieutenant-general of the West Indies] M. de Tracy, I hope that we will have the time to resolve anything that may arrive by fault of Monsieur de la Barre." Colbert de Terron to Colbert, 16 March 1664, quoted in Roy, ibid, 48-49.

the unusual step of trading his magistrate's robes for a commission as *capitaine de vaisseau*, one of his subordinates complained that having to obey "a Master of Requests transfigured all of a sudden into an *homme de guerre*" would have been bearable only "if, in the absence of moral virtues, M. de la Barre had brought some military virtues to his position."[58] Tertre cast him as an adventurer of questionable motives whose cleverness and courage were undermined by incompetence, inexperience, and arrogance.[59] In the next century he was recalled primarily as the great-grandfather of the Chevalier de La Barre, whose trial and execution for sacrilege in 1766 became a *cause célèbre* publicized by Voltaire and Linguet.[60] Canadian historians have long viewed him as a grasping bumbler whose brief tenure as governor of New France ended in a humiliating peace with the Iroquois that provoked his dismissal.[61] As far as he is known today, he is remembered merely as one of many "desperate men and losers [who] would cross the ocean for another chance."[62]

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[58] The subordinate was Robert de Clodoré, who served as governor of Martinique during the Second Anglo-Dutch War, when La Barre was lieutenant-general of the West Indies fleet. Clodoré, "Plaintes et Griefs présentées à Monseigneur de Colbert...contre Monsieur de La Barre, Lieutenant general en l'Amerique," (c. 1670), 6-7. According to Charles Baxter, between 1630 and 1670 only three *intendants de l'armée* made the transition from administrative to military service. La Barre was the only one to enter the navy, though Jean Lauzon de Liré did serve overseas, as governor of Canada. Baxter, *Servants of the Sword: French Intendants of the Army, 1630-1670* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1976), 50.

[59] Jacques François Artur, who served as *médecin du roi* at Cayenne in the eighteenth century and wrote an exhaustive manuscript history of the colony, opted to "imitate the discretion of [Tertre]...but without strictly demanding the same complacence from the reader." Jacques François Artur, *Histoire des colonies françoises de la Guianne*, ed. Marie Polderman (Guyane: Ibis Rouge, 2002; orig. 1778), 195.

[60] J.-Edmond Roy, "La famille Lefebvre de La Barre," *Bulletin des recherches historiques* 2 (1896): 86-87; Chassaigne, "Un maître des requêtes," 321.

[61] R. La Roque de Roquebrune, "Le Febvre de La Barre, Joseph-Antoine," in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, URL: http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/le_febvre_de_la_barre_joseph_antoine_1E.html

[62] Philip Boucher, "French Proprietary Colonies," 176-177.

But La Barre and his pamphlet deserve sustained critical attention: the *Description* was the first text resembling a manual for colonization ever published in France, and its pragmatic vision for planting Guyana broke from previous writings that had painted the colony simply as a paradise or a graveyard. He was hardly above salesmanship—the title of his pamphlet referred suggestively to Guyana as *El Dorado*, and he consistently emphasized both the richness of the land and France's unique ability to exploit it—but he was selectively frank about the difficulties of settlement and adamant that patience, hard work, and careful planning were necessary to overcome them. The novelty of his pitch to would-be *colons* was that he acknowledged the pitfalls of planting and proposed ways to avoid them. He had read the accounts of earlier, failed expeditions, analyzed their shortcomings, and, having acquired knowledge and experience of the land for himself, founded his own colony according to hard-headed principles that would guarantee its prosperity. To prepare his recruits for the practical demands of Caribbean agriculture, he ostentatiously rejected the "chimeras" of the past in favor of "substance and facts [*des solides et effectifs*]."[63]

The *Description* represented not only a shift in the marketing of Cayenne, but also the transmission to metropolitan readers of experiential knowledge then available only to resident planters and a handful of European visitors to the region. Much of this knowledge consisted of a firsthand description and appraisal of Guyana's potential for domestication that would discredit, he claimed, "the Deceptions with

[63] La Barre, *Description*, 11.

which all Others who have written about it have filled their writings."[64] Equally important, he insisted, were his instructions about how to make the transatlantic crossing, where and how to found sustainable plantations, and how to maintain peaceful relations with the colony's indigenous neighbors. At a time when French ministers and planters were beginning to appreciate the value of sugar and other cash crops to European markets—and, consequently, to organize colonial ventures around their production—the need to disseminate such know-how to those who could capitalize large-scale agriculture seemed imperative.[65] La Barre shared their sense of urgency: a near-fatal bout of tropical fever had prompted him to hasten his return to France "in fear of burying with my death the various *connoissances* I had acquired in my Voyage & during a thirteen-month stay in the Country."[66] By recording what he had learned, he hoped to find in print a more secure vessel for his knowledge than his mortal body, ensuring the enlightenment of his readers and the survival of his enterprise in the process.

La Barre aimed to carve French territory out of Guyana by fusing a detailed description free of "vain hopes and fanciful rewards" with a specific plan of settlement and the *connoissances* necessary to effect it; but how did he make the land "knowable" to himself and his readers? As a combined natural history, recruiting pitch, memorandum, guidebook, *récit de voyage*, and corporate origin story, the *Description* defined the past, present, and future of the colony. It wove together two existing genres—chorography, and estate management literature—that had never

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[64] La Barre, *Description*, 8.
[65] Philip Boucher, "French Proprietary Colonies," 163-188.
[66] La Barre, *Description*, 8.

before been combined in France for the purpose of colonization. Scrutinizing each one as it appeared in La Barre's text makes it possible to understand how re-branded Guyana as a place that could be governed and exploited by the French despite their repeated failures to do so.

As circulated in print, prior images of Guyana conveyed a sense of limitless economic possibilities but also a suspicion of the land as untenable. Sir Walter Raleigh launched the first rush to explore the region by claiming that it contained "a greater quantity of gold than the best parts of the West Indies or Peru."[67] After 1612, the successful return of French scouting expeditions spawned a publicity boom that proclaimed Cayenne a new Eden, *El Dorado*, and a land of infinite abundance whose salutary climate cured all ills.[68] Repeated attempts at colonization ended in disaster, however—one party was wiped out under a hail of Native arrows, another decimated

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[67] Walter Raleigh, "La decouverture du beau, grand et riche empire de Guiana, avec un discours de la magnificque et opulente citté de Manoa, nommée par les Espagnols El Dorado,... parachevée en l'an 1595 par sire Walter RAULEG [Raleigh],... traduit d'anglois en françois par Jacques De L'Obel, escuyer, sieur du Val, 1596, et de nouveau reveu et corrigé par le sieur Samuel De Beauvois," c. 1598, BnF Mss. fr. 9670, f. 7v; Jean de Cilleuls, "Les grands voyages de Jean Mocquet, apothicaire du 'Cabinet des Singularitez' de Louis XIII aux Tuileries," *Revue d'histoire de la pharmacie* 49, no. 168 (1961): 13. The first printed edition of Raleigh's *Discovery of Guiana* did not appear in French until 1722, though the sources above suggest that his writings reached France shortly after his return to England.

[68] Boucher, *France and the American Tropics to 1700: Tropics of Discontent?* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008), 57-58. In 1652 the crippled poet Paul Scarron, upon hearing of the virtues of Guyana from Cabart de Villermont, wrote a friend to say he was leaving France for the New World: "Mon chien de destin m'emmène dans un mois aux Indes Occidentales. Adieu France! Adieu Paris!...Je renonce aux vers burlesques, aux romans comiques et aux comédies pour aller dans un pays où il n'y aura ni Mazarins, ni faux béats, ni filous de dévotion, ni hiver, ni saisons, ni fluxion qui m'estropie, ni guerre qui me fasse mourir de faim." Scarron to Sarrazin, quoted in Debien and Châtillon, "La propagande imprimée," 72. According to Paul Boyer, migrants could expect to find a place of "perpetual spring" where "the vine bears grapes twice a year, all of the fruits and animals proliferate continuously in every season, and one never sees hail nor wintry weather that could harm them"; in such bounteous surroundings, "one man could do more work than four others could do in France," and "people do not die but from extreme old age." Paul Boyer, *Véritable narration de tout ce qui s'est fait et passé au voyage que Monsieur de Brétigny fit à l'Amérique Occidentale avec une description des moeurs et des provinces de tous les sauvages de cette partie du Cap de Nord avec dictionnaire de leur langue et un advis très nécessaire à tous ceux qui veulent habiter ce païs-là ou que désirent y establir des colonies* (Paris: 1654), quoted in Debien and Châtillon, "La propagande imprimée": 66.

by mutiny, famine, and Indian attacks—and by mid-century pamphleteers began to admit the hazards of settlement while invoking foreign accounts to corroborate their more enthusiastic claims.[69] By the time La Barre published his *Description*, some still believed that Guyana was a paradise capable of yielding an easy fortune in brazilwood, tobacco, sugar, or gold, but skepticism was widespread enough that he made countering "*Impostures*" and proposing a realistic plan of settlement prevailing themes of his own case for colonization.

Like many colonial writers, La Barre sought to free his readers of troublesome preconceptions of America by impugning the credibility of other sources while insisting upon his own bona fides as an observer and interpreter of his surroundings. His pamphlet contained only "things that I myself observed with care," he claimed, "or which I learned from one of the most able Pilots of this age, who spent an entire year visiting all of the Rivers of this Coast." He distanced himself from previous authors by decrying "the lack of caution which all those who have talked of [Guyana] have brought to their writings...& the inclination they have had to amplify the smallest things, to silence the most considerable ones, or not to give them the esteem they deserve." The contrast was not simply one of integrity but of experience, since these writers' misrepresentations stemmed in large part from "the lack of knowledge they have had of a Country where they have stayed [only] briefly or in which they remained like Prisoners in their Forts and Dwellings, without being able to educate themselves about the things of which they have written."[70] La Barre was not the only eyewitness to events in Guyana, but he claimed, as an intrepid representative of the

[69] Debien and Châtillon, "La propagande imprimée," 65-79.
[70] La Barre, *Description*, 11-12.

king, to wield greater authority than anyone else by virtue of a clearer and better-informed perception of the world around him. He was particularly eager to discredit some members of his own party, whose "despair" at the sorry state of the Dutch colonists had promised "to do us more evil in one day than the service they could render in one month." Having immediately shipped these "weak Spirits [*foibles Esprits*]" back to France, he learned upon his return that they had been working ever since to prejudice the metropole against Cayenne.[71] Their calumnies, like the "vain hopes and fanciful rewards" touted by dishonest authors, were both an obstacle to restoring public confidence in Guyana and a foil for the governor's own pretensions to represent the colony faithfully.

Between the *Description* and several memoranda to Colbert, La Barre invited his readers to see Cayenne as the linchpin of a new royal campaign to promote colonization in the New World. The governor insisted that his company of some twenty investors—a tight-knit group of financiers, high-ranking officials, and Parisian merchants staked collectively at around 200,000 pounds—was merely the nucleus of a much larger venture.[72] Within months of La Barre's departure from France the

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[71] "It is to [them] that Cayenne is indebted to the disgrace in which they have placed the Country during the entire year 1664 and up to May 1665 by the falsehoods they have spewed, & with which they have wished to conceal their cowardice and bury their shame." La Barre, *Description*, 5.

[72] "Car si tost que l'on sera maistre d'un poste que l'on y aura cinq ou 600 hommes establys et fortifiez la compagnie pretend en ce fortifiant...et faisant de nouveaux fonds mettre dix ou douze vaisseaux a la mer pour faire le commerce...des antilles de l'amerique et de la terre ferme qui n'est pas peu considerable et c'est a quoy il sera facile de parvenir car comme l'on ne risque que peu en mettant les effects sur des vaisseaux et que c'est ce que font chaque jour les negociants de toutte l'Europe...lorsque cette petite compagnie deviendra nombreux et puissant...il y aura une utilité...pour la grande compagnie." La Barre, "Mémoire sur les projets de la Compagnie qui se forme pour le Cap Nord et la Guyane," ANOM FM, C14/1, ff. 85-85v (c. 1663). See also La Barre, List of members of the Company of Cayenne, ANOM FM, C14/1, f. 84 (c. 1663) and "Mémoire des choses que la Compagnie demande à Sa Majesté pour l'entreprise de la Terre ferme de l'Amérique," ANOM FM, C14/1, ff. 87-87v (1663). The version of this scheme involving Africa and Canada was articulated in the edict of concession to the Company of Cayenne. La Barre's insistence that this company would give way to a larger one probably explains why Colbert, who normally distrusted small trading

West Indies Company indeed supplanted the Company of Cayenne, maintaining the same directors but adding five new shareholders and a sizable injection of royal funds.[73] The same publicity campaign that would later produce the *Description* soon followed.[74] By alluding implicitly to Colbert and explicitly to the new company, the governor's pamphlet put forth a message that colonists and investors stood to join a vast enterprise, backed by the king, that would divert the New World's wealth from English and Dutch coffers to French ones.[75]

In contrast to charters and letters patent of the period, the *Description* mobilized no Christian or legal rhetorics of legitimation; instead, La Barre emphasized agriculture as the legitimating force behind his company's possession of the land.[76] Like some contemporary English colonizers, he was dismissive of any

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companies as inadequate to the task of carrying out overseas commerce, endorsed his proposal. Boucher, "Comment se forme un ministre colonial: L'Initiation de Colbert, 1651-1664," *Revue d'histoire de l'Amérique française* 37 (1983): 441-444.

[73] The Compagnie des Indes occidentales, capitalized at approximately 7,000,000 pounds, bought out nearly every colonial proprietor in order to monopolize French trade with the West Indies. Pierre Pluchon, *Histoire de la colonisation française*, vol. I (Paris: Fayard, 1991), 85-86. Colbert may have embraced the Company of Cayenne as convenient cover for this imminent commercial coup. See Mims, *Colbert's West India Policy*, 63-83; Artur, *Histoire*, 195-197.

[74] The crown ensured that Renaudot's *Gazette* of July 1664 announced the news that "Un des Navires que la Compagnie des Indes Orientales, a envoyez en l'Isle de Cayenne, vient d'arriver ici [La Rochelle], & nous apprend que le Sieur de la Barre y est tres bien établi: les Hollandois, & ceux des autres Nations qui s'en estoyent emparez, lui ayans volontairement remis le Fort, avec tout ce qui appartenoit aux François. Il ajoûte qu'il y a desja trois villages composez de pres de 300 Familles de diverses Nations, qui ont cultivé les terres avec tant de soin, qu'outre les vivres qu'ils y recüeillent en abondance, ils ont, aussi, de grandes Habitations plantées de Cannes de sucre: tellement qu'il y a apparance qu'on pourra dans peu de temps, y faire un avantageux Commerce." *Gazette*, no. 93 (26 July 1664), 761.

[75] La Barre claimed, alluding to Colbert, that the company was "sous la protection d'un des plus zelez Subjets que la France ait jamais veu posseder les bonnes grace de son Maistre." La Barre, *Description*, 3.

[76] La Barre may have felt that the right of a Catholic prince to exercise dominion over heathen land was understood, and as for law, justifications of title might have seemed redundant when he already had in hand a royal concession, a notarized *acte de prise de possession*, and a treaty of capitulation from the colony's Dutch, Native, and Jewish inhabitants. For the articles of capitulation (18 May 1664) and the *acte de prise de possession* (22 May 1664), see ANOM COL C14, vol. 1, ff. 74-77v and 92-92v. On the rhetoric of letters patent, see Tomlins, "Legal Cartography," 321-322, 326-347.

claim to territory not based on direct cultivation of the land.[77] He denounced the "languishing remainders" of the Dutch colony who cursed "a Land that they had not even deigned to cultivate, as if without any labor on their part, & without assistance from Europe, it would have provided them with all the necessities of life."[78] Previous French expeditions were no better, having consistently and short-sightedly neglected planting in favor of idleness, petty trade, and theft. The English living nearby had "scattered dwellings" but not the "considerable *Habitations*" that comprised the new French settlement. As for the "lazy" Indians, their agrarian lifestyle was restricted to subsistence farming.[79] None of these groups held a valid claim to Guyana, he argued, because none had bothered to exploit its greatest resource—the soil—in a systematic way.

In contrast, his own party of some 1,200 colonists, soldiers, and African slaves had embraced agricultural production as the organizing principle of their new colony. From the outset, each man had "willingly devoted himself to labor, from the Leader down to the smallest Boy." Their devotion to planting was impressive enough to earn them acceptance from their longtime foes: "The Indians who saw us as their old enemies, soon changed their minds...They told us that we were not of the Nation of those French who came before us, who did nothing but quarrel, fight, & kill each

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[77] Pagden, *Lords of All the World*, 65-79; Tomlins, *Freedom Boun: Law, Labor, and Civic Identity in Colonizing English America, 1580-1865* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 133-189. La Barre would adopt a similarly attitude in 1668 when, following the colony's destruction at the hands of the English and their relocation of its Jewish inhabitants to Surinam, he would concede the Jews' plantations to French bidders with the caveat that the original owners could reclaim title if they returned to work them within three years. Artur, *Histoire*, 226.

[78] La Barre, *Description*, 5. The Dutch may not have invested heavily in a settlement to which they held no right, but along with their Jewish cohabitants they established the first *sucreries* in Cayenne during the years preceding La Barre's arrival, and both the terms of their capitulation and the accounts of Tertre and Artur suggest they had accomplished enough to leave "with pain in their hearts."

[79] La Barre, *Description*, 5-7 (Dutch and French), 14 (English), 37-39 (Indians).

other; & who, instead of giving themselves over to labor and the planting of the Land, had no other occupation but to steal from [the Natives'] Gardens and Fields all they could take for their subsistence."[80] As a result they had become staunch allies. La Barre's expedition thus promised to overcome a fatal flaw that had bedeviled French settlements in America since first contact: the failure of migrants to commit to agriculture, which in turn produced starvation and conflict with indigenous neighbors.[81] For him, the hard work of planting was not only necessary to the colony's livelihood but also a source of optimism and moral purpose among the colonists, a cure-all for sickness, and a validation of the French presence in the eyes of its most inveterate opponents. It followed from this notion of labor as redemptive and legitimating that what Cayenne needed in a leader was an administrator, like himself, with the capacity to manage its cultivation—not "a flashy captain, accompanied by trumpets, who only knows how to command soldiers," as one of his informants put it, but rather "someone who knows how to command workers."[82]

In keeping with his role as planter-in-chief, La Barre envisioned a chronology of settlement that unfolded according to the demands of provisioning and market

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[80] La Barre, *Description*, 6.

[81] Olive Patricia Dickason, *The Myth of the Savage and the Beginnings of French Colonialism in America* (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 1984), 201-202. Precisely a century before La Barre founded his colony at Cayenne, French Huguenots had failed to establish their own settlement at Saint Augustine, prompting Gaspard de Coligny to lament that "[T]here were no tillers of the soil, only adventurous gentlemen, reckless soldiers, discontented tradesmen, all keen for novelty and dreams of wealth." See Ina Baghdiantz McCabe, *Orientalism in Early Modern France: Eurasian Trade, Exoticism, and the Ancien Régime* (New York: Berg, 2008), 71.

[82] Desbordes-Martin, "Mémoire sur l'établissement d'une nouvelle Compagnie pour Cayenne, avec description du pays, et de l'état où s'y trouvent les Hollandois," 1662, ANOM COL C14, vol. 1, ff. 190-194. Brother Desbordes-Martin appears to have penned this memorandum shortly after meeting Paul Languillet, a ship's captain who had lost everything in Royville's ill-fated attempt to colonize Cayenne in 1651-1652 and then sailed there again in 1660-1661. The two men agreed that previous expeditions had failed because their leaders had been too harsh and ostentatious, not knowing how to encourage settlers and make them work.

agriculture. His party had spent the summer and fall burning away forest and building homes near the village of Cayenne (350 French, 50 slaves, a fort, a sugar mill), then passed the winter and spring planting foodstuffs and sugar cane. The arrival of further supplies from France, he claimed, "spawned the desire among these new Americans to leave the confines of their Island, & to go into the mainland," where fifty men settled along the coast at Kourou, in time to harvest 25,000 pounds of sea turtle meat to feed the rest of the colony.[83] Soon the French founded, reinforced, or planned more settlements at Remire (60 Portuguese Jews with 80 slaves, 60 French with 25 slaves, a chapel, a sugar mill), Mahury (40 French, 40 slaves), Matoury (100 French, 45 slaves), Sinamary (80 French), Comaribo (35 French), and Aprouaque, in addition to twenty-five or thirty isolated farms sprinkled throughout the island (60 French, 20 slaves). For La Barre, the features of these settlements worth stressing were their means of subsistence and production: population size and the presence of an enslaved African or free Indian workforce, available game and livestock, a sugar mill powered by oxen or water, and nearby moorings and waterways for transport. In general, he defined first settlement as a process of "clearing forest and planting edibles"—*not* building mines or trading posts—since he felt that obtaining food and preparing farmland were critical to the ultimate goal of raising cash crops.[84]

Chorography, or the detailed and systematic analysis of a region, was a natural means of expressing how this agricultural dynamic of colonization should play out spatially: if the overall peopling of Guyana conformed to the demands of cultivation, so its precise movements should follow the lay of the land on which that cultivation

[83] La Barre, *Description*, 7.
[84] La Barre, *Description*, 40-43.

depended. The first two chapters of La Barre's pamphlet therefore presented a comprehensive review of the area's geography, topography, soil, climate, flora, fauna, and indigenous peoples. Such intimate descriptions of foreign locales and their inhabitants were popular reading in France and the primary medium through which early-modern Europeans encountered unfamiliar spaces.[85] Chorography's narrative-descriptive style was pervasive enough in the seventeenth century even to shape the language of legal documents, including colonial charters and letters patent, whose claims to territory read like "chorographic perambulations," although they were increasingly glossed with precise measurements of latitude and longitude and other "scientistic impositions" that foreshadowed the conventions of Enlightenment cartography.[86] In this respect the *Description* was no different—it, too, combined mathematical coordinates with topographical narrative to define space—but the comparatively lengthy format and loose conventions of a pamphlet allowed La Barre to engage in a thicker description of Guyana than legal paperwork would have done, affording him room to speculate as to how human, animal, and plant populations might be correlated with each other and the terrain to ensure a lasting and profitable colonization.

La Barre's description paid special attention to rivers, since at bottom the spatial pattern of settlement he envisioned for Guyana was fluvial: the principal means of connecting people and produce to ports and markets would be an abundance

[85] Chorographies and *récits de voyage* appeared regularly, for example, among the works published by the Clouzier brothers.
[86] Tomlins, "Legal Cartography": 322-323, 345-346.

of waterways that had already channeled Europeans into specific sites of habitation.[87] Nearly every paragraph of his first chapter opened with the creeks and rivers that criss-crossed a given area. Major rivers defined the boundaries of Guyana to the south (the Amazon) and to the north (the Orinoco), straddling perhaps 300 leagues of coastline veined by "an almost infinite number of Rivers, which provide a very great convenience to those who live there and would like to people this vast expanse of land, to which we place no limits in [the direction of] the interior."[88] France's portion lay between the "Indian" and "Anglo-Belgique" Guyanas, bordered to the south by Cap d'Orange and to the north by the Marony River. Relying on information gleaned from Native informants and the pilot he had hired to explore the region's waterways, La Barre described the various harbors along the coast as well the width and depth of major tributaries, evaluating their potential as routes of transport. His map (fig. 1) detailed their mouths, forks, and bends as far as these were known, along with the current state of the settlements that lined them. In his account, water fundamentally defined promising and unpromising areas for colonization. Indian Guyana was marshy and uninhabitable to Europeans, who suffered from its "bad and feverish air"; Anglo-Belgique Guyana hugged the Marony River, whose access to arable land did not begin until five or six leagues above a mouth cut perilously by sand bars; neighboring Surinam's water-logged plains produced low-quality manioc and sugar and "barely enough food to feed its inhabitants." French Guyana, by contrast, boasted navigable streams that were accessible from the sea and bordered by rich

[87] On the ideological uses of chorography and potamography in contemporary French travel writing, see Tom Conley, *The Self-Made Map: Cartographic Writing in Early Modern France* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), 237-243.
[88] La Barre, *Description*, 13.

highlands exposed to sunlight and salutary winds.[89] Here "the Land is commonly fertile & abundant, & because heat and humidity are the principle causes of generation, one should not be surprised at the fine and frequent productions of a Country where these two qualities predominate."[90]

La Barre populated this well-irrigated landscape with flora, fauna, and indigenous peoples whose signal trait was a keen potential for exploitation. Unsurprisingly, his own study of local fruits, vegetables, pasture, seafood, and game had revealed enormous potential.[91] As for the once-feared Galibi, Yao, Sapaye, Palicour, Aricaret, Marone, Paragotte, and Arrouague peoples, all were now "strongly diminished" and eager to obtain French protection and trade. Their local knowledge made their friendship invaluable if France wished to explore the interior or develop a traffic in medicinal plants, he argued, and they were already prepared to help the new settlers with the more immediate work of burning forest and planting gardens.[92] By emphasizing the Natives' "small number," commercial promise, and ongoing domestication, La Barre emptied Guyana of colonization's greatest human obstacle, leaving only a rump contingent of willing allies who could facilitate the extraction of lucrative goods.

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[89] La Barre, *Description*, 13-25.
[90] La Barre, *Description*, 29.
[91] La Barre, *Description*, 29-32.
[92] "They recognize at present that they must submit to Europeans," he reassured his readers, "& are disabused of the notion that they can keep their Lands for themselves...They are lazy, & there is little service to be had from them. Nonetheless it is good to maintain them as friends, & if they had the inclination to be more active, by their assistance we would have discovered Brazil, Aloes, Sadaux, & Cedar; strong Gums...of which we now have only a few samples; & two kinds of Balm, of which they have brought us some samples that have been found to contain a rare virtue. Time will teach us more, [and] will supply us with the means to make a good trade of these things." La Barre, *Description*, 17 (Mocquet), 34-41.

Once the terrain had been evacuated of hostile Indians and populated with edible plants and animals, La Barre was free to imagine how the French might profit from the land in ways similar to or better than other European states. "If these things [plants and animals] are very advantageous for the feeding of our *Habitants*, the produce of the Earth for market will be no less so, since it gives to us all that Brazil supplies to the Portuguese, & of the same quality," he promised. The current state of each cash crop was promising. Cayenne's tobacco "is of much better quality than that of the islands," its cotton "excellent," and its *rocou* and indigo "under cultivation by our settlers." As for the colony's sugar, henceforth it would be entirely "white and refined, & of an average price of 100 or 150 *livres* per hundred [weight], which we can accomplish with ease, & which is entirely impossible in the French Islands, as in the English, [since we have] rich Soil in abundance." The *terre ferme* also enjoyed a near-infinite supply of fuel, thanks to its immense forests, which would make the refinement of cane comparatively cheap. And Guyana's vast pasturelands would allow ranchers to generate "considerable profit" as well as a significant diminution of human labor. Taken together, these advantages pointed to a future bright enough to outshine all other ventures:

> if it is true not only that an infinite number of inhabitants, French and English alike, have enriched themselves in the Antilles by [their] imperfect and defective goods, but [also] that the Towns of Flushing & Middelburg have profited several millions with them (of which we cannot doubt), what should we expect from our France Equinoctiale, after three or four years of settlement has given to our French the things necessary for their manufactures & to establish strongly their *Sucreries* & Refineries, which are barely begun

> since they planted their Colonies eighteen months ago?[93]

In contrast to previous writers, La Barre framed Cayenne's promise as contingent upon several years' worth of labor and investment. His pamphlet therefore cast the expert planter—not the *conquistador*, the missionary, the small freeholder, or the itinerant trader—as the leading protagonist of colonization.

La Barre wrote in a chorographic idiom to make Guyana familiar and attractive to investors, but his plans to actually implement colonization drew upon another literature whose audience had grown dramatically over the previous century: estate management guides. Since the outbreak of the Wars of Religion, an increasing number of Paris's upwardly-mobile merchants and magistrates, including the LeFebvre family, had been "colonizing" the city's outskirts, taking advantage of a buyer's market occasioned by the wars to transform moribund fiefs and small holdings into sprawling domains adorned with chateaux and manicured parks.[94] Agronomic and horticultural manuals proliferated to meet the demand of new landowners for knowledge about how to improve their estates, cultivate gardens and orchards, and maintain a country house.[95] By instructing readers to bring their lands under rational control, this literature nourished an improving agenda that men of state—including Henri IV and his Superintendant of Finances, the Duc de Sully, as

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[93] La Barre, *Description*, 32-34.

[94] Thierry Mariage refers to this process as a "bourgeois colonization" of the Paris region. By the 1630s, there was already a market for guidebooks to these estates and their gardens, led by the royal historiographer Denis II de Godefroy's *Belles maisons et promenades qui se peuvent faire autour de Paris* (1639). Mariage, *The World of André Le Nôtre*, trans. Graham Larkin (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999; orig. 1990), 14-19. In 1605 François Miron, who served as Paris's Prévot des Marchands (five decades before Lefebvre de La Barre's father held the same post) estimated that half the kingdom's lands had been sold through the Châtelet in recent years. Jean-Pierre Babelon, *Henri IV* (Paris: Fayard, 1982), 783. On the Lefebvre family's own history of landowning, see below.

[95] On this horticutural literature in particular, see Chandra Mukerji, *Territorial Ambitions and the Garden of Versailles* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 153-161.

well as Louis XIV and Colbert after them—embraced and applied to the realm as a whole.[96] Although aristocratic observers remained ambivalent or hostile toward estate management as an effeminizing distraction from the masculine duties of public life, successive kings and the new men who served them were inspired by books such as Charles Estienne's *L'Agriculture et maison rustique* (1574) and Olivier de Serres' *Le théâtre d'agriculture et mesnage des champs* (1601) to see large-scale infrastructure projects, agricultural reform, and commercial regulation as beneficent tools of governance that promised to make France the leading economic power of Europe.[97]

Such works explicitly likened planting to politics. The frontispiece of Serres' *Théâtre* represented a monarch, perhaps Henri (to whom Serres dedicated the text),

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[96] Mariage, *André Le Nôtre*, 12; Mukerji, *Territorial Ambitions*, 155-161; Mukerji, "Bourgeois Culture and French Gardening in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries," in *Bourgeois and Aristocratic Cultural Encounters in Garden Art, 1550-1850*, ed. Michel Conan (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 2002), 184-185.

[97] On the reservations of *les grands* toward estate management in the seventeenth century, see Jonathan Dewald, *Aristocratic Experience and the Origins of Modern Culture: 1570-1715* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1993), 12, 20-21, 158-163. Estienne was a printer and chorographer who sought to translate the agricultural knowledge of Palladius and other Ancient sources to France. Serres, whose work was more influential in court circles, aimed to provide readers with the practical knowledge and moral advice necessary to reshape the war-torn countryside into an earthly paradise of social harmony and just profits. Serres had distinguished himself as an agricultural expert by rescuing an impoverished Provençal fief from ruin and reforming it into a thriving domain. His success drew the attention of Sully and the king, who hosted him at court to discuss topics ranging from planting techniques to experimental gardening before encouraging him to put his ideas into print. When the *Théâtre d'agriculture* appeared, Henri had chapters read to him every day for several months, and thereafter he refused to make agricultural policy without consulting what he called his "*bon ménager*." Serres intended the book primarily for France's rising urban elites, the prospective landowners whom he believed most likely to lack both estate management skills and the self-discipline necessary to moderate their greed. Its appealing combination of digestible know-how, moral rectitude, and literary merit propelled it through seventeen editions over the next five decades. Reflecting upon Serres' legacy in 1789, the English agronomist Arthur Young declared him "the great parent of French agriculture." On Serres' career and the *Théâtre*, see Fernand Lequenne, *La vie d'Olivier de Serres* (Paris: Sequana, 1942), 244-263; Babelon, *Henri IV*, 782-783; Jonathan Patterson, "Avarice in the Moral Landscape of Olivier de Serres's *Theatre d'Agriculture et Mesnage des Champs* (1600)," *Forum for Modern Language Studies* 49, no. 3 (Oct. 2012): 244-256. For a list of non-academic editions, the final of which appeared in 1805, see Henri Gourdin, *Olivier de Serres: science, expérience, diligence en agriculture au temps de Henri IV* (Arles: Actes Sud, 2001), 309-311. For Young's comment, see Arthur Young, 20 August 1789, *Travels in France during the years 1787, 1788 and 1789* (London: 1790), quoted in Gourdin, *Olivier de Serres*, epigraph.

ruling over an orderly expanse of fields and formal gardens worked by his subjects, under which the phrase "*Securitas Publica*" was inscribed.[98] According to Serres, careful and learned husbandry (*bon mesnage*) was the governing principle of both the well-managed estate and the well-ordered kingdom. In both cases, peace and prosperity depended upon the ruler-patriarch's moral and intellectual self-cultivation. Like the good king, the good landowner (*bon mesnager* or *bon père-de-famille*) must reside on his domain, surveille its dependents, and take an active role in its administration, which demanded a series of specialized *connaissances* treated thematically by Serres in separate chapters: he must know how to familiarize himself with the character of his lands and their soils, to choose and measure them wisely, to adapt his use of them to their natural qualities, to build and maintain a house suitable to his family's needs, to conduct himself appropriately inside and outside the home, to design gardens and fields, to recognize what to plant and when, to manage his workforce, and to harvest, preserve, consume, sell, and distribute charitably the fruits of his labors. Such "*science*...applied with Reason, led by Experience, & practiced with Diligence," he claimed, would shield the tenderfoot landowner from the common pitfalls of avarice, sloth, and unrealistic expectations.[99] For Serres, the estate was the state in microcosm, subject to the same improving vision of agricultural stewardship.

Whether La Barre ever read the *Theatre d'Agriculture* or any other guidebook is unknown, since evidence of his library has not survived, but both the *Description*

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[98] Serres, *Le théâtre d'agriculture*, frontispiece and preface.

[99] Serres, *Le théâtre d'agriculture*. For an analysis of the moral dimension of the *Theatre d'Agriculture*, see Patterson, "Avarice in the Moral Landscape of Olivier de Serres's *Theatre d'Agriculture et Mesnage des Champs* (1600)."

and his own history of landholding suggest that he knew the challenges of estate management personally. The LeFebvre were precisely the kind of urban neophytes to whom Serres had addressed his book. In 1638 Joseph-Antoine's parlementaire father, Antoine II, acquired the fief of La Barre, in Brie, providing his family for the first time with a provincial base to complement its residence in Paris. Shortly thereafter he diverted water from the neighboring plain of Beaurose to irrigate the park, and it was probably on his initiative that a pond was transformed into a proper water feature divided into two parts separated by a bridge linking the château to the farm. No evidence survives of Joseph-Antoine's own involvement in the estate's affairs either before or after his father's death in 1669, but he was serving in province or overseas for many of these years; the large fortune and intact seigneurie he left behind at least suggest that he did not mismanage them.[100] How well father and son fit Serres' model of the *bon mesnager*, then, is difficult to say—as an absentee, Joseph-Antoine presumably did not—but their experience as landowners would have taught them the exigencies of governing a large estate and re-ordering the land to suit their needs, both fundamental themes of agricultural writing since at least the 1560s.[101]

La Barre extended the robe's "colonization" of the Paris basin to Guyana. His own sizable plantation at Matoury, which he purchased in 1664 from the outgoing Dutch governor, appears to have turned a profit for him, his brother, and his son through at least the late 1680s. Around 1672 it encompassed 30 livestock, two

[100] As of 1615 the estate had included a château, courtyard, garden, barn, cowshed, and walled dovecot, as well as woods, coppices, a windmill, a gardener's house, a wine press, a pond, a canal, and various lands, much of which the Lefebvre would reshape to suit their needs during more than a century as owners. Michel Moresve, *Ballade historique à Férolles-Attilly* (Férolles-Attilly: 2004), 27-29.

[101] See, for example, Estienne and Liébault's text as well as Bernard Palissy, *Recepte veritable* (1563).

windmills, a fully-stocked *sucrerie*, and 78 African slaves—three times as many as there had been eight years before—in addition to the ten outbuildings, the main house, the kitchen, and the cane fields that had formed the original estate.[102] As in the case of his father's fief, La Barre's precise role in the plantation's success is unclear. The vicissitudes of his career would soon take him to the West Indies, the Mediterranean, and Canada before his death in Paris in 1688, and he may not have returned more than once following the publication of his pamphlet. But even if he did not embody the ideal landowner himself, he spent his first thirteen months in America surrounded by prosperous planters and seasoned informants who knew the demands of Caribbean agriculture. If he consulted them, he would not have been the first colonial governor to appropriate the vernacular knowledge of planters.[103] Whether his ideas originated in personal experience, word-of-mouth, or prescriptive literature, he formed definite opinions about how new arrivals to Guyana should manage the founding of their own *habitations*.

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[102] By the terms of capitulation, La Barre's company compensated the Dutch for their plantations, agreeing to pay the Dutch governor, Guérin Spranger, 21,850 florins for his plantation alone, which included ten houses, some ripe and immature sugar cane, a cane field, a crop of cassava, 26 experienced African slaves, a home for the master or overseer, and a kitchen. Mims, *Colbert's West India Policy*, 67 and 67n30; Artur, *Histoire*, 203. For the state of the plantation in the 1670s and 1680s, see Compte et accord entre Antoine Joseph Lefebvre de La Barre et Cyprien Lefebvre de Lézy, Archives Nationales, Minutier Central, ETXII 179, ff. 1-1v (5 March 1680); "Inventaire des effets qui sont sur l'habitation de Mathoury appartenant a Messieurs de La Barre, de Lezy et de Thiene," ibid, ff. 2-4v (4 March 1679, orig. "devant la guerre des hollandois"); Sale of house, slaves, livestock, *dependances*, *droits* by Joseph-Antoine Lefebvre de La Barre to François Lefebvre de La Barre, AN MC ETXII, 202-203, ff. 1-3v (20 November 1687).

[103] A model in this regard was Longvilliers de Poincy, governor of Saint Christopher (1638-1660), who kept a copy of Estienne's *L'Agriculture et maison rustique* on hand while building an incomparably-rich sugar plantation from the knowledge of Dutch immigrants. "Inventaire après décès du bailli de Poincy"; Michel-Christian Camus, "Le général de Poincy, premier capitaliste sucrier des Antilles," in *Le sucre, de l'Antiquité à son destin antillais* (Paris: CTHS, 2000), 77-84. During a stop in Martinique on his way to Guyana in 1665, La Barre stayed with a rich planter, Samuel-François Le Vassor de La Touche, who may have introduced him to the methods of plantation agriculture there. Chassaigne, "Un maître des requêtes," 335n6.

La Barre expressed those opinions most fully in the final chapter of his pamphlet, "On the manner in which one must act to undertake these new Colonies, with the use of Embarkation timetables & things necessary to make them succeed." The chapter served as an instruction manual for new colonists, whom La Barre understood to be city-dwelling and thus inexperienced men of means who wished to put down roots in Guyana after reading his account. He assumed that his readers would bring their households and tenants with them (their "*gens*" or "*monde*"), that they would be tempted to overspend and overpack, and that they might not be prepared for the difficulties of the crossing, the climate, the food, and the hard labor of planting ahead of them. "I do not believe I can refrain from teaching them the ways in which they must conduct themselves to succeed most profitably," he declared, "since one can bear more fruit with a moderate expense, directing it toward useful things and taking advantage of the most suitable weather, than with a much larger one [if he were] not observing these circumstances."[104] His audience could rest assured that his instructions were drawn from "lessons that experience alone has taught us." He was in the midst of outfitting a sizeable fleet to return to the colony, he promised, and would be there himself to greet newcomers, whom he did not want "to have reason to complain once there that I had filled them with vain hopes."[105]

Much of La Barre's advice focused on the details of outfitting and executing the transatlantic crossing, but always with the broader concerns of planting in mind. Colonists must leave France in spring to arrive in June, he urged, since "the foremost of all labors is that of felling & burning Woods, to ready the Land to be worked and

[104] La Barre, *Description*, 44.
[105] La Barre, *Description*, 45.

planted," which could only be done in the dry season. A late departure meant almost certain failure: those attempting to work during the "great rains" would "render their *Gens* useless, cause them great inconveniences, and even some sicknesses" as they were forced "to plant the cultivated Soil slowly and laboriously [*de longue main*]," all the while requiring nourishment at great expense and little return. During the voyage, planters must see to their workers' health, thereby ensuring their readiness to labor upon arrival. Giving them wine instead of water to drink would prevent dysentery. Providing a year's worth of flour would allow them to habituate themselves gradually to manioc, since indigestion, on top of the taxing change of climate, would cause their bodies great suffering. Foodstuffs were the most important cargo, but migrants must be wary of "those who pressure them to burden themselves with delicacies, & to spend all of their tidy sum on Brandy, Hams, Jams, and other goodies"—brandy in particular being responsible every year for the deaths of "more than fifty People" who overindulge.[106] La Barre also listed a few trade goods and farm tools that colonists should pack, warning them otherwise to avoid the useless and untradeable "Baubles that most People bring." In all of these cases, his recommendations ultimately sought to prepare future *habitants* and their dependents for the demands of agricultural production, with the strong implication that success or failure in planting hinged in large part upon choices made before departure from France.

That was no less true of the planter's choice of laborers, which for La Barre represented the most crucial set of decisions a prospective colonist would make. "To enjoy a favorable success in his enterprise, one must above all observe the quality of

[106] La Barre, *Description*, 45-46, 48, 50-51.

the People he wishes to bring to establish new Colonies," the governor warned. Like Serres, he believed the surveillance and well-being of workers to be of paramount concern to the landowner; unlike Serres, he attributed this concern less to any moral imperative on the part of the planter than to the productive maintenance of morale. The worst mistake one could make was to hire "men whom one has filled with vain hopes or fanciful ideas," he argued, since they would undoubtedly become afflicted with "the most dangerous sickness of this Country...which we call the stomachache [*mal d'estomach*], which comes but from an obstruction caused by regret and melancholy, leading those attacked by it to the grave within a few weeks." Like the "weak Spirits" he had shipped back to France, such men were convinced they would find all they desired in Guyana "without any trouble or work" and "are deeply stunned when one employs them at labors ruder than those to which our Peasants in Europe are normally accustomed." Coupled with the unfamiliar food and climate, the shock of hard labor became too much for them, with the result, beyond their untimely demise, that their passage and board became a sunk cost to the planter. With the exception of skilled tradesmen, then, he must avoid hiring the young men of the towns ("debauched...the plague of new Colonies") in favor of "Peasants and *Gens* accustomed to work, & to the sort of food that people of the Countryside ordinarily eat." It was essential, moreover, that he explain to them before departure the nature and extent of the labors ahead of them. Without any cause for surprise or disappointment upon arrival at Cayenne, they would be primed to "give themselves over to the pleasure of their work, which is the most advantageous thing one can

procure for the preservation of their health."[107] La Barre thus connected the physical welfare, contentment, and moral character of laborers to their productive potential and, by extension, to the ultimate prosperity of the plantation.

The number and "Nation" of a planter's *gens* was likewise a critical factor in his success, one whose calculus La Barre expected to evolve over time. He did not want colonists "to spend too much up front on their first establishments, nor to burden themselves with the passage of a great number of Men," since a large work party would have to waste time and provisions constructing lodgings for themselves and shelter for their supplies instead of clearing land and planting food. The successful colonist thus brought just "a small number of choice Men, perhaps ten," who could build themselves one modest dwelling before swiftly turning their attention to deforestation and the growing of enough food to feed twenty more workers by the following year. Fewer men also meant a lower risk of death from disease, which was a real danger mainly during the first twelve months or so.[108] Only a limited portion of these men, moreover, should be slaves—no more than two-thirds. "It is not that the blacks are not much better workers, & cost much less than the French," he explained, "but it is important to establish one's security upon those of his own Nation, & to prefer in the first year those who give it to you to those who could make you a greater

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[107] La Barre, *Description*, 46-48. Artur painted a more sympathetic portrait of those shocked by their first look at a new colony: "...men without experience, arrived in a country decried for its almost constant rains at precisely the height of the wet season, and who did not foresee that the rains would become more bearable as more land was cleared, who instead of well-built towns and cultivated fields saw only a heap of huts covered by a few palm fronds, endless woods filled with creeper and thorny plants and which they could not enter except by several tortuous paths—barely practicable—which led them into the muck and the mire, and past small clearings where they saw only nude slaves and some half-covered Whites, as it happens in the beginning of such settlements. That alone could have strongly discouraged Europeans who perhaps had imagined something else entirely from the exaggerated descriptions and magnificent promises that similar companies had not failed to impose upon the public." Artur, *Histoire*, 203.

[108] La Barre, *Description*, 49-50.

profit, but in whom you cannot trust." Alluding to the specter of slave resistance in an undermanned colony, the governor warned his readers not to sacrifice safety to their lust for gain, reminding them "that it is rather agreeable to risk little up front, & that one does it more boldly when small beginnings have almost assured you the success of a greater enterprise."[109] The time to invest in more labor—and a greater proportion of enslaved labor—lay in the near future of larger, better-policed estates, stable revenue streams, and integrated commercial empire.

The need for the planter to identify his long-range interests with a modest outlay and the good of his workers remained critical after arrival in the New World. Echoing Serres and other proto-agronomists, La Barre feared that his recruits would foolishly chase short-term commercial profits to the detriment of their laborers and the long-term prospects of their estates. Their error would be compounded by a mistaken belief in the arability of freshly-cleared soil: "Once [the colonists] have arrived...may they apply themselves above all to growing *vivres*, before dreaming of whatever can bring them *marchandises*, since beyond the fact that newly-uncovered Land is not good for Cane nor for Tobacco, Cotton, Indigo, & Rocou, & that Labor and Sunlight must prepare it first, it is more essential to consider the subsistence of your *Gens* than to think of your profit." Edibles such as manioc, beans, potatoes, yams, corn, and wheat were vital to the subsistence of workers during the critical first

[109] La Barre, *Description*, 50. He might have added that the three-year timeline of indenture contracts would expire around the same time that labor-intensive crops should overtake provisioning as the plantation's primary activity (see below), conveniently allowing the embryonic corps of French peasants to give way to a larger, cheaper, more productive workforce of African slaves just as they were most needed.

stages of planting, he argued, and grew better in "new Land," anyway.[110] Growing indigo and cane in deficient soil was all the more pointless if only a half-starved workforce remained to harvest and refine them. Eight decades before Samuel Martin and other "improving" planters began to tout the agricultural, financial, and humanitarian benefits of planting provisions, La Barre mobilized primitive soil science and a mercenary concern for the welfare of laborers to convince his readers to privilege their investment in men over quick and illusory riches.[111] If mitigated by the right kind of knowledge and attitude, he suggested, the egoism that had undermined previous ventures could be redirected to serve the long-term interests of individual planters, dependent laborers, and the colony alike.

La Barre's case for a sustainable model of planting preceded and overshadowed his instructions about actually growing commodities for market. Only when the risk of disease and starvation had abated and the land was sufficiently "cultivated and heated by the Sun," he declared, should colonists begin to diversify their farming to include cash crops. Yet his advice about how to proceed was sparse: "In rich Lands one can plant Corn, Beans, and Manioc in the same Field, but he must observe that the latter does better in elevated and dry Soils, & that Sugar Canes do best in lowlands, where Indigo does not grow at all, but rather demands Hills & Soils that are never waterlogged. Cotton grows everywhere and Rocou Trees as well."[112] Beyond these generalities, he offered no information about where, when, or how to

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[110] With the exception of corn and potatoes, which "by our Observation...do not grow as well in new Land as in that which has already been cultivated & heated by the Sun." La Barre, *Description*, 51.
[111] Samuel Martin, *An Essay Upon Plantership* (Antigua: T. Smith, 1750 ed), 12-14. On the context of Martin's emphasis on provisioning, see Justin Roberts, *Slavery and the Enlightenment in the British Atlantic, 1750-1807* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 43.
[112] La Barre, *Description*, 51-52.

plant these goods, where to acquire seeds, how to manage their growth, the nature and extent of the labor they required, or how and when to harvest, process, and sell mature product. Such know-how was either limited to resident planters or did not yet exist outside of more advanced English, Dutch, and Portuguese settlements, where colonists would not begin to record it until the 1670s nor to synthesize it into printed manuals until the mid-eighteenth century.[113] Given the limits of his own experience, La Barre may not have known more than he wrote. Probably he assumed that newly-arrived planters would learn all they needed from seasoned locals, as was customary elsewhere in the Caribbean.[114] Whatever the case, his silence regarding production further emphasized foundations—the transatlantic crossing, provisional farming, and a sustainable long-term approach—over the later work of growing foodstuffs for market.

Taken together, La Barre's instructions fashioned an ideal planter-patriarch who, like the ideal governor, was "someone who knows how to command workers." By training his readers to select, deploy, and value labor, he encouraged them to regulate their own conduct in ways that maximized the long-term productivity of their

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[113] With the exception of private correspondence, of course, in which such knowledge circulated from the earliest years of colonization onward. Even after planters had begun to record their knowledge for widespread use, experimentation and the influx of slave labor would generate a continuous revision of best practices. In Barbados, for example, knowledge of planting initially spread by word-of-mouth, within and beyond the island, then began to be recorded in the 1670s by Henry Drax, whose manuscript "instructions" to planters were revised by fellow Barbadians as the island's plantation culture evolved; eventually these instructions were appended to William Belgrove's printed manual, *A Treatise upon Husbandry or Planting* (1755). Thus individual knowledge distributed orally became "community knowledge" circulated in manuscript and eventually formal knowledge disseminated in print. See Roberts, *Slavery and the Enlightenment*, esp. 42-43. Belgrove (1755); Gibbes (1797); Préfontaine (1763).

[114] On the human transfer of planting knowledge between islands (Barbados and Jamaica), see Amussen, *Caribbean Exchange*, 73-74. La Barre himself hoped to learn advanced sugar-refining methods from the Portuguese Jews of Brazil, who carried their knowledge to Guyana, Surinam, Martinique, Nevis, and other colonies in these years. Mordehay Arbell, *The Jewish Nation of the Caribbean: The Spanish-Portuguese Jewish Settlements in the Caribbean and the Guianas* (Jerusalem: Gefen, 2002), 36-54.

estates. To make a plantation colony succeed in Guyana where others had failed, those whom he held most responsible for past miscarriages—the principal colonists and proprietors—would have to take the lead in imposing order on the natural and moral wilderness of America. In this respect they resembled the ideal landowners who oversaw the "improvement" of the French countryside. A plantation, like a provincial estate, posed problems of financial, ecological, and labor management that were best met with a mixture of formal knowledge (*science*), practical wisdom (*expérience*), and determination (*diligence*). La Barre's innovation was to blend these principles into an ethic of colonization that explicitly linked individual planters' economic behavior with the achievement of French commercial and imperial designs, much as Serres and Estienne had done for metropolitan landowners and the agricultural rebirth of the kingdom.

La Barre's *Description* produced no stampede to people Guyana, nor, if the sporadic course of planting over the following decades is any indication, did it serve directly as the basis of a permanent settlement there.[115] But it did shape enduring, influential narratives of French colonization in the New World. The Old Regime's leading historians of the French Antilles, Jean-Baptiste du Tertre and Jean-Baptiste Labat, relied upon it to reconstruct the colony's first years and the founding of the West Indies Company, and they echoed La Barre's belief in the centrality of planting

[115] Cayenne was sacked by the English in 1667, seized temporarily by the Dutch in 1676, and otherwise subjected to attack or encroachment by France's rivals to the point that by 1743, according to one visitor, its population had been reduced to 90 Europeans, 125 Indian slaves, and 1,500 African slaves, and there remained only 60 *rocouries*, 19 sugar plantations, and four *indigoteries*. Despite these periods when the colony languished or appeared to fail, the same observer insisted upon a fundamental continuity of settlement stretching back to La Barre, the colony's "founder," as Artur would do thirty years later. Barrère, *Nouvelle relation*, 45-46, 50.

to the future of France's tropical possessions.[116] His pamphlet helped to produce empire by appropriating foreign spaces to a particular vision of territoriality—a vision that Tertre, Labat, and others would promote through their own accounts of colonial expansion.[117]

The Science *of the Conqueror: Jean-Baptiste du Tertre, History, and the Governance of Caribbean Colonies*

French administrators brought books to America by the boxful.[118] If the surviving evidence is any indication, History, which encompassed geography and travel writing, was well represented in their libraries.[119] Within the genre, Antiquity, modern European states, and overseas voyages appear to have been the most popular subjects. La Barre cited Jean Mocquet's *Voyages* (1616) to Asia, Africa, and the

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[116] Labat, *Voyages*, t. I: 150-299;

[117] Labat, *Voyages*, t. I: 150-299; Tertre, *Histoire*, t. IV: 122-128; Artur, *Histoire*.

[118] The Chevalier de Poincy, *lieutenant général* of the Antilles, kept more than 150 books and manuscripts in his home on Saint Christopher. Governor of Martinique Phélypeaux du Verger housed hundreds of volumes in his *cabinet*. Governor of Canada Montmagny left behind several texts when he returned to France in 1648. "Inventaire après décès du bailli de Poincy"; Pontchartrain to Bignon, 6 March 1714, ANOM COL B, vol. 36, f. 98; Antoine Roy, "Ce qu'ils lisaient," *Cahiers de Dix*, vol. 20 (1955): 202. Although inventories after death have survived in only a handful of cases, and some were recorded after their subjects had retired to the metropole (where they presumably maintained larger libraries), administrators appear to have wielded among the most extensive collections of books in the New World. By comparison with other literate colonists, intendants and governors such as Michel Begon (roughly 7,000 volumes), Antoine-Denis Raudot (1,500 titles in 2,000 volumes), Michel Begon de la Picardière (58 titles in 230 volumes), François de Beauharnois (88 in 205), Poincy (90 titles), Jacques de Meulles (140 volumes), and Jacques Raudot (83 volumes) all owned exceptionally large numbers of printed works—on par with the libraries of the Parisian robe nobility from which most of them came. Duplessis, *Michel Begon: un curieux du XVIIe siècle*, 7; "Inventaire après décès...de Poincy"; Jean-Claude Dubé, "Les intendants de la Nouvelle-France et la République des Lettres," *Revue d'histoire de l'Amérique française*, vol. 29, no. 1 (1975): 42-43. By comparison, the largest known library in New France between 1650 and 1700 was owned by Louis Rouer de Villeray (34 titles in 42 volumes), a notary and member of the Sovereign Council. Patricia Fleming, Gilles Gallichan, and Yvan Lamonde, eds. *History of the Book in Canada: Beginnings to 1840* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004), 204.

[119] Their reading varied according to personal taste, but fragmentary evidence suggests that histories occupied a substantial portion of their reading: 39 of Beauharnois' 88 books were histories, as were 14 of Poincy's 90 and 10 of Begon de la Picardière's 58. The other most popular genres were theology and jurisprudence. Dubé, "Les intendants": 42-43; "Inventaire après décès...de Poincy."

Americas in his pamphlet and probably read both Antoine Biet's (1664) and Jean de Léry's (1578) accounts of expeditions to Brazil and Cayenne. Governor of New France Louis de Buade de Frontenac owned copies of Caesar's *Commentaries*, Champlain's *Voyages* (1632), and Jean de Lartigue's *La Politique des Conquérants* (1662), the last of which aimed to teach rulers the "*Science* of the Conqueror" in the manner of Aristotle's instructions to Alexander.[120] Governor of Martinique Philippe de Poincy kept a copy of Plutarch's *Lives of the Noble Greeks and Romans* on hand, along with numerous histories and descriptions of Malta, the Papacy, Madagascar, Brazil, Canada, and the West Indies in French, Spanish, English, and Dutch. Whether or not these volumes were read and to what end is impossible to say, but at the very least, their owners considered them worth the trouble and cost of shipping.

What is certain is that the authors of some of these works believed that colonial administrators would read them and apply the lessons they contained to the business of governance. The three most popular and influential histories of the Antilles published in France under Louis XIV all professed to serve a didactic purpose. Biet hoped that his firsthand account of Royville's disastrous expedition—which had been destroyed by greed, mutiny, and the assassination of its chief by would-be "petty Kings"—would "serve as a lesson to those who wish to undertake something similar, if they want to direct their enterprise to a happy end." Charles de Rochefort peppered his *Histoire naturelle et morale des Antilles* with moralizing asides about French and foreign officers. Tertre opened his *Histoire générale des Antilles* with the "hope that [this book] will be useful to the Preservation of the

[120] "Inventaire après décès du Marquis de Frontenac," (22 April 1699), in *Nouvelles Archives de l'Art français*, 3e série, vol. XV, *Revue de l'art français ancien et moderne* (Paris: Charavay, 1899), 225; Jean de Lartigue, *La politique des Conquérants* (Paris: Barbin, 1663 ed.), dedicatory epistle.

French Colonies...Governors will learn by the conduct of those who preceded them to avoid that which has been the ruin of some, & to practice that which has raised the fortunes of others."[121] All three authors were clerics, not royal servants, but each had been an eyewitness to events in the New World, and all felt that their writings could strengthen France's empire by providing a mirror for governors.[122]

They had reason to expect a favorable reception, since colonial officials had been instrumental collaborators in the production of their texts. Rochefort received memoranda, maps, drawings, a Carib vocabulary, and glittering testimonials from Poincy and the Protestant leaders of colonies in Florida, all of which he appended to the second edition of his work.[123] Biet wrote his account with the help of Royville's

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[121] Biet, *Voyage de la France Equinoctiale en l'isle de Cayenne* (Paris: F. Clouzier, 1664), preface; Charles [sometimes César] de Rochefort, *Histoire naturelle et morale des Antilles*, 2 vols. (Lyon: Fourmy, 1667 ed.; orig. 1658), 96-98; Tertre, *Histoire générale des Antilles habitées par les françois* (Paris: Jolly, 1667-1671), dedication. Rochefort's text became influential in England, where John Davies translated and plagiarized it, repackaging it in the process as a description of the English Caribbean—one of only two anglophone works on the English Caribbean to appear in the seventeenth century (the other being Richard Ligon's 1657 *A True and Exact History of the Island of Barbados*. See Nicolas Canny, "French and English Contributions Compared," in *Migration, Trade, and Slavery in an Expanding World: Essays in Honor of Pieter Emmer*, ed. Wim Klooster (Leyden: Brill, 2009), 217-218. Tertre's history has been the most complete account of the seventeenth-century French Antilles since its debut. It provided the foundation of nearly every eighteenth-century history of the French Caribbean, most notably Jean-Baptiste Labat's *Nouveau Voyage aux îles Françoises de l'Amérique* (1722), and it remains a touchstone primary source for historians, historical anthropologists, and natural historians of the West Indies. Garraway, *The Libertine Colony*; Stephan Lenik, "Carib as a Colonial Category: Comparing Ethnohistoric and Archaeological Evidence from Dominica, West Indies," *Ethnohistory* 59, no. 1 (2012): 80-81; Frederick H. Smith, "European Impressions of the Island Carib's use of Alcohol in the Early Colonial Period," *Ethnohistory* 53, no. 3 (Summer 2006); J. H. Galloway, "Tradition and Innovation in the American Sugar Industry, c. 1500-1800," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 75, no. 3 (1985): 334-351; Wayne Burke and W. George Lovell, "Demise at the Edge of Empire: Native Depopulation in Dominica, 1493-1647," *Conference of Latin American Geographers Yearbook* 26 (2000): 1-16; Marco Masseti, "Anthropochorous Mammals of the Old World in the New," *International Journal of the Systematics, Biology & Ecology of Mammals* 75 (2011): 113-142.

[122] Before the mid-1670s, every narrative history of the Antilles published in France was written by a cleric, with one exception: Guillaume Coppier's *Histoire et Voyage des Indes occidentales* (Lyon: 1645). On this obscure text and the history of its reception, see Gerard M. Hunt, *Desperate in Saint Martin: Notes on Guillaume Coppier* (Bloomington, IN: Trafford, 2012).

[123] Poincy obtained the vocabulary from a local Dominican, Raymond Breton, who also supplied Du Tertre with information drawn from Carib sources. Rochefort, *Histoire*, letters; Jacques de Dampierre,

godson, the royal librarian Jerôme Bigot, whose assistance vouched for its accuracy and presumably gave Biet access to official papers.[124] And Tertre used his own connections in Paris and the islands to acquire and reproduce in his history thousands of "authentic documents" of all kinds supplied by the crown, governors, intendants, lieutenants-general, churchmen, merchants, company directors, secretaries, and colonists, including the personal archive of Nicolas Fouquet, the king's former Superintendant of Finances and a leading promoter of colonization throughout the 1650s.[125] The three authors were hardly like-minded—Tertre, a Dominican, accused the Huguenot Rochefort of plagiarism and outright fabrication, and he denounced the Jesuit Biet for his portrayal of Dominican missionaries as impious libertines—but in the same sort of feedback loop that characterized Villermont's gazeteering, all used privileged access to administrative sources to interpret colonization for agents of the crown.[126]

The unparalleled documentation, scope, and influence of Tertre's narrative makes it a particularly useful window onto contemporary efforts to define a colonial *science* of governance. He not only drew on greater experience of the islands and a wider range of sources than his rivals, he also devoted more space to analyzing the successes and failures of past governors, and his work was read by officials on both

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Essai sur les sources de l'histoire des Antilles françaises (1492-1664) (Paris: Picard, 1904), 120, 137-145.

[124] Biet, *Voyage*, preface.

[125] Tertre excerpted long passages from these records or reproduced them in full in the midst of his narrative. Tertre, *Histoire*, vol. I, preface and vol. III, preface.

[126] Tertre wrote bitterly of Rochefort's work that "almost all [of it]...was so faithfully taken from my Book, that he did not even omit the mistakes I made." Tertre, *Histoire générale*, vol. I, preface.

sides of the Atlantic.[127] His attempt to reconcile classical and contemporary models of rule with the unprecedented demands of New World settlements testifies to the intellectual ferment generated by the ongoing royalization of the colonies at the time of his writing. By diagnosing the ills of some governments and celebrating the virtues of others, Tertre hoped to point a way forward for administrators whose primary frames of reference were classical or French rather than American. Biblical patriarchs and Roman heroes were useful moral exemplars, he implied, but governing the islands well also required practical solutions tailored to unfamiliar New World problems.

Tertre drew his lessons from a series of character studies of royal and proprietary governors spanning the first four decades of French settlement in the Caribbean. Beginning with Belain d'Esnambuc in Saint Christopher and continuing through the *sieurs* d'Olive, Plessis, Aubert, and Houel in Guadeloupe, Parquet in Martinique, Le Vasseur at La Tortuga, and Poincy, Patrocles, La Barre, and Tracy as lieutenants-general of the Antilles, he defined a series of qualities that differentiated good officers from bad. The composite good governor was courageous, wise, affable, civil, prudent, just, public-minded, pious, well-bred, wealthy, gentle, and masculine; the bad was weak, cowardly, rash, greedy, deceitful, licentious, tyrannical, bellicose, impious, cruel, and unjust. These were stock political virtues and vices that lent themselves to classical or medieval parallels. Esnambuc fought "like Alexander,"

[127] When Tertre made his second voyage to the islands in 1656, Governor of Martinique Parquet corrected him about some details of his earlier *Histoire Générale des îles des Saint Christophe, de la Guadeloupe, de la Martinique, et autres dans l'Amerique* (Paris: Langlois, 1654), which served as the basis for Tertre's later, more comprehensive history. Tertre, *Histoire Générale des Antilles*, vol. 1, 192-193. See also Pierre Arnoul's purchase of Tertre's history in "Despence faitte par boulliet a commencer du [blank] octobre apres avoir arresté les comptes du voiage d'Italie," BnF NAF 21402, fol. 48v (Apr. 18, 1673); Poincy owned the *Histoire Générale des îles des Saint Christophe*. See "Inventaire après décès...de Poincy."

rendered justice simply and directly like Louis IX, and deserved the same adoring homage in death that Virgil had rendered to Caesar. Olive's and Plessis's mismanagement of Guadeloupe created a famine worthy of Josephus's Jerusalem. Le Vasseur's heresy, burdensome taxes, and overweening ambition to reign "more like a King than a Governor" were repaid at the point of a sword wielded by his own adopted son, to whom he cried out, "as Caesar once did to Brutus, *Hé, so it is you, Tibaut, who kills me*."[128]

Despite these analogies, Tertre portrayed the colonies as a unique test of character that posed special challenges rooted in their particular origins. Their essential problem, he contended, was that they were states conceived in greed. What had pushed Europeans to settle the Americas was "the desire to possess riches...which had never acted so powerfully upon the heart of Europe's inhabitants than it has since 1493."[129] Avarice had already doomed numerous expeditions by turning their leaders against each other and poisoning relations with indigenous peoples, as had been the case in Guadeloupe and Cayenne.[130] Tertre found no precedent for the corrosive lust for gain inherent to colonization. It was a new phenomenon, and it aggravated the "thousands of unexpected events" and "almost invincible obstacles" the French encountered by encouraging governors to disobey their orders and oppress the

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[128] "The greatness of his virtues does not require this public recognition to render immortal the name of the GREAT D'ENAMBUC, & I can say of him what Virgil said of the great Caesar, *In freta dum fluvii current, dum montibus umbro / Lustrabunt convexa ; Polus dum sydera pascet, / Semper honos, nomenque tuum, laudesque manebunt* [While rolling rivers into the sea shall run; / And round the space of heav'n the radiant sun; / While trees the mountain tops with shades supply, / Your honor, name, and praise shall never die]." Tertre, *Histoire Générale*, vol. I, 119-120. In fact these words from *The Aeneid* were spoken by Aeneas in praise of Dido, not Caesar. Virgil, *The Aeneid*, trans. John Dryden (New York: Collier and Son, 1909; orig. 1697), 96-97. For the Alexander, Clovis, Jerusalem, and Caesar analogies, see vol. I, 77-79.

[129] Tertre, *Histoire Générale*, t. I: 1.

[130] Tertre, *Histoire Générale*, vol. I, 77-79; vol. III, 1-4.

weak.[131] Inspired by his fellow Dominican Bartolomé de Las Casas, he described in graphic detail the decline of powerful men like Le Vasseur, Houel, and Poincy into "tyrants" willing to commit barbarities against slaves, Indians, settlers, and each other in pursuit of profit.[132]

Historians have described Tertre's work as a humanist history or as missionary propaganda in the Las Casas mould, but these readings overlook its practical implications for governance.[133] He wanted his readers to be not only good Catholics but also good rulers, which demanded more than Christian virtues. Past experience showed that there were concrete steps administrators could take to ensure the peace, productivity, and happiness of their colonies. The success of Martinique, for example, was the direct result of d'Esnambuc's careful planning. The governor had selected 100 men from Saint Christopher to pioneer the settlement, all of whom were accustomed to the island air, fit to work, and experienced in the labor of clearing land, planting, and building habitations. He provided them with the necessary arms, ammunition, tools, and seeds; personally oversaw their planting of manioc and potatoes; and left them in the care of an able lieutenant with orders to remain on good terms with the Caribs. Tertre stressed the contrast between Esnambuc and Olive, who at the same time had failed to plan or provide for Guadeloupe and then compounded his error by waging a costly war against his Indian neighbors.[134]

Tertre believed that his history could instruct governors at a pivotal moment in colonization, since it was in their youth that colonies were most vulnerable to

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[131] Tertre, *Histoire Générale*, vol. III, 1-3.
[132] On Tertre and Las Casas, see Doris Garraway, *The Libertine Colony*, 52-53.
[133] For this sort of reading, see Garraway, *The Libertine Colony*, 50-58.
[134] Tertre, *Histoire Générale*, vol. I, 65-101.

disorder. Unlike the historians who followed him, he still considered France's settlements to be in their infancy. They were "newborn Colonies" whose inhabitants required greater freedom "than people born under laws"—a condition that good administrators understood and respected.[135] Like children, moreover, they were impressionable and assumed different qualities according to their paternity. "If it is true that all of the infants who have come from the same mother are so different that no two are ever found to be alike," he declared, "this proposition is no less true in the different *peuplades* issued from the islands of Saint Christopher, Guadeloupe, & Martinique, which I may call the three Mothers who have born all the Colonies of our Antilles."[136] The same difference held between colonies settled from France and those settled from the islands, since the material support and leadership experience available to them varied. Saint Christopher had suffered early on from isolation and want, but d'Esnambuc's wise conduct had rescued it from disaster, and he had used what he had learned to ensure a much smoother founding at Martinique, which in turn had produced peaceful colonies in Grenada and Saint Lucia. The seasoning factor was decisive: because Esnambuc was not only "powerful, rich, [and] beloved by all the people" but also "greatly experienced in the building of Settlements," he had "wisely avoided the reefs upon which others would have foundered."[137]

Tertre dwelled on d'Esnambuc's example in part because it had already proven itself to be a successful model for others. Parquet, the governor's nephew, had been "raised under his uncle's discipline," and when he became governor of

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[135] Tertre, *Histoire Générale*, vol. I, 109. Cf. Labat, *Nouveau Voyage*, preface.
[136] Tertre, *Histoire Générale*, vol. I, 168.
[137] Tertre, *Histoire Générale*, vol. I, 99-100.

Martinique he "moulded his Government upon that of...his uncle, followed its method, and shaped his conduct after that of this Illustrious Founder of French Colonies so well that it seemed as if the same spirit animated their two bodies." Like d'Esnambuc, he exempted the original settlers from all taxes for three years, maintained peace with the Caribs, and attracted new inhabitants by his generous, affable, and disinterested ways. The people of Martinique, "seeing Monsieur Esnambuc resurrected in the person of his nephew, resolved to be as happy under the Government of the one...as they had been under the command of the other." Having spoken to those who were there when Parquet arrived, Tertre could confirm that the governor's "behavior, & the familiarity with which he carried himself with them, was the magnet that attracted everyone to him, & made it such that [Martinique] has become today the most populous of the French Islands."[138] In highlighting the "method" employed by d'Esnambuc and Parquet to make Martinique the wealthiest colony in the Antilles, he showed his readers the means to establish prosperous governments elsewhere.

Even more pointedly than its successful transmission from uncle to nephew, the failure of this method to survive Parquet demonstrated just how dependent the island's prosperity was on the specific actions and qualities of its governors. His death in 1658 put his wife in command—in itself troubling to Tertre, who frequently used women in power as a symbol of disorder—and her attempt to levy new taxes with the help of a male outsider sparked a rebellion that spread when a copy of Machiavelli's writings was discovered among her possessions. (The rebels petitioned

[138] Tertre, *Histoire Générale*, vol. I, 104-114.

the colonial council to have it "burned by the Executioner as the rule of her conduct.") "Madame la Générale" was imprisoned immediately, and the island descended further into chaos after the rebels massacred several Caribs. Only the arrival of Tracy in 1664 restored order, as he was able to broker peace and reimpose with "marvelous dexterity" all of the masculine virtues of firmness, integrity, justice, and wisdom upon the colony's affairs that had been absent since Parquet's death. In revoking the new tax, moreover, he "revealed the means so sought after, so visible, and so little known, of consolidating and augmenting the French Colonies in these parts," which was to favor the industry of the inhabitants by keeping duties low. Tertre took the opportunity to remind his readers "that the happiness of all those who are or who will be in future Seigneurs of these Islands, will always walk in step with that of the *habitants*."[139] By gendering the political vicissitudes of the colony, identifying Machiavelli and another male outsider as disruptive influences, and upholding Tracy as a new model of the benevolent patriarch, he powerfully reinforced his message that the right "method" of governing colonies was a known and repeatable process of good character (masculine, disinterested, caring) expressing itself through time-tested policies (low taxes, direct justice, peace with the Indians).

There is no evidence that Tertre shaped the conduct of colonial officials, only that some of them owned his history. That the colonies continued to supply, in his words, "more revolutions, more revolts, more intrigues, more persecutions against the Church, more innocents oppressed, more criminals absolved, and more tragic tales than a great empire could lament during an entire century" in the years following its

[139] Tertre, *Histoire Générale*, vol. I, 534-548; vol. III, 67-81.

publication suggests that his lessons were not applied as he had wished them to be.[140] But his text bears witness to the use of books as a medium through which chroniclers and administrators of colonization worked together to define a "*Science* of the Conqueror" for New World settlements. In Tertre's telling, that *science* rested less on Old World models than on a cumulative experience of governance in the islands. Classics and Scripture remained powerful frames of reference for political action, but a growing body of empirical evidence, grounded in firsthand observation and documentary sources, more often informed his judgment of what constituted the best "method" of rule. At a time when colonial governments were still in their infancy, publishing what he had learned seemed like the surest means to reach those in position "to avoid that which has been the ruin of some, & to practice that which has raised the fortunes of others."

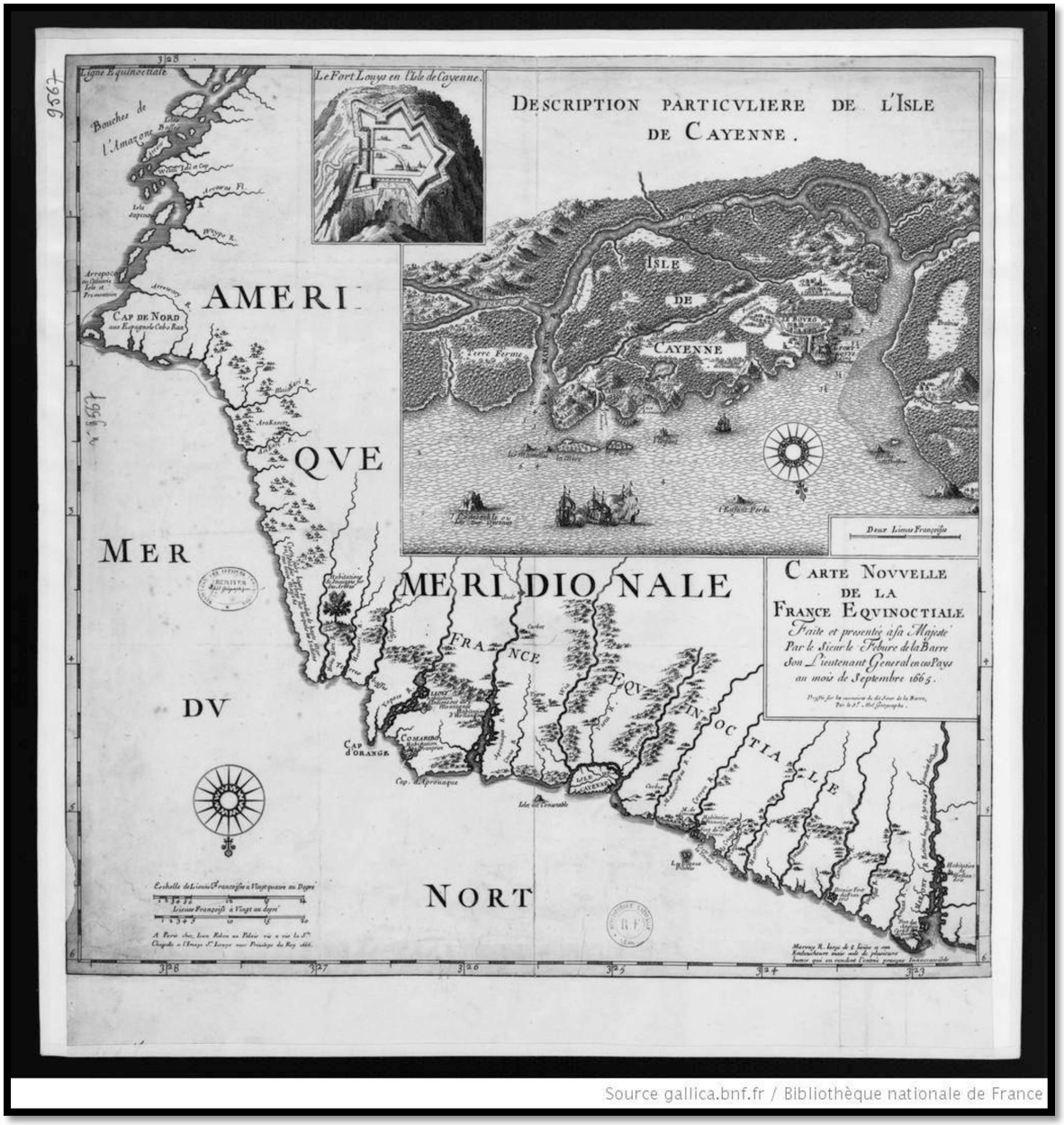
Conclusion

The cases studied here reveal how three disparate observers with experience of the colonies envisioned the progress of settlement and governance in the New World. At a formative moment of royal intervention in the Americas, they sought to define the stakes, interpret the course, or guide the conduct of colonization. They engaged in different forms of writing, supplemented their experience with different sources, and stood at different removes from the crown. Nonetheless, they shared a conviction that the past and present state of the colonies could provide useful lessons to the king's agents. They portrayed French overseas expansion as a glorious, godly,

[140] Tertre, *Histoire Générale*, vol. I, 121.

and potentially profitable enterprise, if conducted by the right people and according to the right principles. In identifying those people and outlining those principles, they remained emphatically focused on developments in individual colonies or regions, insisting on the specific needs, qualities, and histories of each one. In the next chapter, we will see how a new perspective on colonization emerged within the ministry—one that sought to harness the collective potential of France's New World possessions within a single imperial project.

Figure 1. Joseph-Antoine Lefebvre de La Barre's map of Cayenne. Source: La Barre, *Description de la France équinoctiale* (1666).



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Chapter 3. A Glorious and Profitable Empire: Commercial Governance, Colonial Markets, and Antoine-Denis Raudot's Cape Breton Scheme

"[Colonial] Settlements produce nothing when we are building them, but rather always cost some upkeep...yet eventually, once they are well established, they produce ever-growing revenues."
– Antoine-Denis Raudot (1708)

In the summer of 1686, the outgoing intendant of New France, Jacques De Meulles, submitted to Louis XIV and Minister of the Navy Jean-Baptiste Colbert de Seignelay an exuberant memorandum outlining his plan for a new colony at Acadia (Nova Scotia), that remote fog-enshrouded peninsula "which we have not known until now." Over the previous nine months, De Meulles had personally scouted the coasts and waterways of the area, commissioned maps and soundings of its harbors, and drawn up a census of its 885 scattered European inhabitants. "The knowledge I have acquired since arriving here," he declared, "will perfectly enlighten you...[about] a project we can make of it, which I imagine to be one of the most profitable and glorious things that His Majesty could undertake." The source of this extraordinary union of glory and profit was neither the land itself nor the people in it, but rather an "infinite manna" in which Acadia "surpasses all other countries in the world, without exception": cod.[1] At a time when much of Europe relied upon fish to provide a source of protein during religious fasts and to supplement the virtually meat-free diets of its peasants and slaves, the continent devoured somewhere between 200,000 and

[1] De Meulles to Seignelay, 24 September 1685, ANOM COL C11A, vol. 7, ff. 138-138v; De Meulles to Seignelay 18 July 1686, and De Meulles to Louis XIV, 19 July 1686, ANOM COL C11A, vol. 8, ff. 307-315; "Mémoire instructif de la manière dont on fait la pêche du poisson sec à l'île Percée et ailleurs," 1686, ANOM COL C11D, vol. 2, ff. 60-62; "Recensement fait par De Meulles, intendant de la Nouvelle-France, de tous les peuples...[des] costes de l'Acadie," 1686, ANOM COL, Recensements et documents divers, vol. 466, pp. 14-57; "Mémoire touchant le Canada et l'Acadie," juillet 1686, BnF Collection P. Angrand, pièce 1373, pp. 7-19. This memorandum is a transcription of the original, which is located in ANOM COL C11A, vol. 8, ff. 273-310.

250,000 live-weight pounds of cod each year from Newfoundland shoals alone.[2] A fortified entrepôt at Acadia, just off the Grand Banks, would allow Louis not only to become "absolute master of all the cod consumed in Europe," De Meulles predicted, but also to provide an ice-free outlet for Canadian goods, stimulate commerce with the West Indies, protect French shipping, dominate the fur trade, pacify the Iroquois, ruin the colony of Massachusetts, annex New York, subjugate Florida and Virginia, purge the blight of Protestantism from the Americas, and establish "a universal monarchy in this continent"—all without firing a single shot.[3] Despite the intendant's fulsome pitch, however, the prospect of becoming King Cod failed to capture the imagination of Louis or his naval minister, who likely balked at the enormous outlay, and perhaps did not see the *grandeur* in making France the fishmonger to the world.[4]

Twenty years later, another memorandum, written by the new intendant of Canada, Antoine-Denis Raudot, arrived at the Versailles bureau of the ministry of Marine and quickly transformed the way French officials saw their overseas colonies. In previous decades, royal administrators had written extensively about the means necessary to rule the Americas in a way that would simultaneously exploit their resources, accommodate local exigencies, and uphold metropolitan conventions of public order; yet, as we have seen, they had remained resolutely focused on the relationship between France and the individual colonies they sought to govern.

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[2] Jeffrey Bolster, "Putting the Ocean in Atlantic History: Maritime Communities and Marine Ecology in the Northwest Atlantic, 1500-1800," *The American Historical Review*, vol. 113, no. 1 (February 2008): 30.

[3] De Meulles, "Mémoire touchant le Canada et l'Acadie."

[4] De Meulles, who had been recalled without explanation during his voyage to Acadia (probably due to accusations of financial malfeasance), received no response to his proposal from the ministry or the king, nor was he reimbursed for his expenses or even granted an audience upon his return to France. W. J. Eccles, "Jacques De Meulles," in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, URL: http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/meulles_jacques_de_2E.html (accessed 15 April 2016).

Raudot had taken on a bolder task: to imagine how the king's various overseas possessions might be integrated with each other and foreign markets to comprise a single, coherent trading empire, one whose commanding strategic position would bring about unequivocal French supremacy in Europe and the New World. The unexpected linchpin of his plan, like De Meulles's, was a fortified entrepôt in the heart of the Atlantic cod fisheries, this time at Cape Breton Island, a rock so obscure that his quizzical superiors would have to launch an expedition expressly to map it (Figures 1-3).[5]

Raudot's "Memorandum on the Present Affairs of Canada and the Settlement at Cape Breton" helped inspire a renewed commitment to state-led colonization and propelled his long career as one of France's preeminent thinkers on economic matters. His project made the deplorable material and military conditions of turn-of-the-century France and its colonies a reason to expand, rather than contract, the scope of royal intervention in overseas trade. Seignelay's successor, Jérôme Phélypeaux de Pontchartrain, pressed Raudot on several points yet staunchly voiced the crown's enthusiasm for a plan that promised not only to "revive" Canada but also to "make His Majesty master of the Americas" at a time when years of defeat, depression, and declining revenues had sapped the regime's confidence: "I disagree with your opinion," he admonished a clerk who fretted over the "impossible" expense. "We must not cower at the difficulties, we must overcome them in proportion to the utility

[5] That year the ministry commissioned an expedition to map the island and sound its harbors, because Pontchartrain could not tell from various written accounts where, precisely, the new colony should be situated. Pontchartrain to Vaudreuil, 24 February 1713, ANOM COL B, vol. 35, f. 2, reproduced in *Rapport de l'archiviste de la Province de Québec, 1947-1948* (Québec: Imprimeur du roi, 1948), pp. 195-196; L'Hermitte, "Carte d'une partie de l'Isle du Cap Breton" and "Plan du Havre Ste. Anne," 9 November 1713 and 20 September 1713, in the series of six maps of the area contained in AN Marine 3JJ, vol. 273, ff. 1-8.

[of our goal], and it is important that we put everything in motion before the peace. You will see why."[6] Within less than a decade, the ministry would implement Raudot's vision for Cape Breton Island (rechristened Île Royale) and establish a garrison port at Louisbourg that would indeed emerge as the axis of France's New World empire.

Raudot's proposal circulated far more widely, and for much longer, than most administrative records of its kind. In 1744, the Jesuit priest and chronicler Pierre-François-Xavier de Charlevoix, who had befriended Raudot during their voyages to and from Canada, printed the intendant's memorandum virtually unabridged in his history of New France.[7] From there the document found an avid readership in Boston and London, where pamphleteers touted it as incontrovertible proof that Britain must seize Cape Breton if it wished to secure its own empire against "the Arts and Intrigues of *French Ministers*."[8] "Raudot (about thirty two years ago) shewed the *French* Court the Expediency and Advantage of establishing a Staple or Magazine

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[6] "Resumé d'un mémoire de Raudot, *fils*, sur l'île du Cap-Breton," 1709, ANOM COL C11C, vol. 8, f. 57.

[7] Pierre-François-Xavier de Charlevoix, *Histoire et description generale de la Nouvelle-France* (Paris: Rolin, 1744), t. XX: 388-397.

[8] The principal English pamphlets were authored either by William Bollan, son-in-law of Massachusetts Governor William Shirley and the colony's agent in London between 1746 and 1762, or co-authored by Bollan with the Boston lawyer Robert Auchmuty, Sr. or with the commander of the Massachusetts militia, Sir William Pepperrell, who led the expedition that captured Cape Breton in 1745. For the reprintings and repackagings of Raudot's memorandum, via Charlevoix, see Bollan and Pepperrell, *The Importance and Advantage of Cape Breton, Truly Stated, and Impartially Considered* (London: Knapton, 1746), 63-74, 77-81 ("*French Ministers*" on 77); "The Compiler" [Bollan], *The Great importance of Cape Breton, demonstrated and exemplified* (London: Brindley, 1746); Massachusettensis [attr. Bollan], *The importance and advantage of Cape Breton considered, in a letter to a member of Parliament from an inhabitant of New England* (London: 1746); Anonymous, *Two Letters concerning some farther advantages and improvements that may seem necessary to be made on the taking and keeping of Cape Breton* (London: 1746); Anonymous, *An Accurate Description of Cape Breton...its Importance to France, but of how much greater it might have been to England* (London: Cooper, 1755); Anonymous, *Memoir of the principal transactions of the last war between the English and French in North America...containing in particular an account of the importance of Nova Scotia and Cape Breton to both nations*, 3d ed. (London: 1758).

upon the Island of *Cape Breton*, for all Goods...passing between *Old* and *New France*," one British advocate announced shortly after the first capture of Louisbourg by Massachusetts militiamen in 1745, "therefore we are furnished with a Hint, how to render this Island not only immediately useful, but also how to people, fortify, and enrich it in a short time [to become]...*a Staple or Mart for all Goods and Traffick carried on between* England *and its* American *colonies*."[9] The English translations quickly made their way into Dutch and German.[10] As a reviewer from Amsterdam wrily observed, "Father Charlevoix gives us a Memorandum that he would have hidden away carefully if he had foreseen the consequences...We find in it all the reasons that Intendant *Raudot* proposed to the Court to establish a colony...[and] to make the English see Cape Breton as the most important conquest they could achieve."[11] The plan continued to resurface in histories of the New World well into the 1780s. After the second and final conquest of Louisbourg in 1758, British officials still invoked Raudot's proposal as the most compelling argument for retaining "this important spot of earth."[12]

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[9] Bollan and Pepperrell, *Importance and Advantage of Cape Breton*, 79.

[10] William Bollan, *De Importantie en Voordeeligheid van Kaap-Breton* (Delft: Boitet, 1746), 84-130; William Bollan and Robert Auchmuty, *Die Wichtigkeit und Vorteil des Kap Breton* (Leipzig: Schenk, 1747), 96-138.

[11] *Bibliothèque raisonnée des ouvrages des savans de l'Europe* (Amsterdam: Wetstein & Smith, 1746), 75-76.

[12] Thomas Jefferys, *The Natural and Civil History of the French Dominions in North America* (London: 1760), 121-122 ("spot of earth"); Anton Prévost, *Histoire générale des voyages* (Paris: Didot, 1757), t. XIV: 671-675; Pierre Joseph André Roubaud, *Histoire générale de l'Asie, de l'Afrique, et de l'Amérique* (Paris: Des Ventes de la Doué, 1775), t. V: 740-743. Although not cited, Raudot's memorandum may well have informed Samuel Hollingsworth's 1786 survey of Cape Breton's economic past and potential, which appeared in French the following year. Samuel Hollingsworth, *The Present State of Nova Scotia, with a Brief Account of Canada and the British Islands of North America* (Edinburgh: Creech, 1786); *Relation de l'état actuel de la Nouvelle-Écosse* (Paris: Lagrange, 1787). See Jeffrey L. McNairn, "Meaning and Markets: Hunting, Economic Development and British Imperialism in Maritime Travel Narratives to 1870," *Acadiensis*, vol. 34, no. 2 (Spring 2005): 6n17.

What had Raudot seen in Cape Breton Island that so appealed to imperial thinkers in Europe and North America? Why did his scheme, and not the strikingly similar one proposed by De Meulles, become a well-publicized blueprint for empire in the Atlantic world? What have scholars had to say about his memorandum and its significance? Raudot's writings have not quite lapsed into obscurity. In the nineteenth century, a French politician and descendant of Raudot fawningly reviewed the intendant's proposal in the pages of an economic journal, proclaiming his forebear "an economist who did not know it."[13] Since then, the memorandum has played a recurring if minor role in histories of Nova Scotia, New France, and the French Navy.[14] Remarkably, none of these scholars has noticed the essential value that made the scheme a compelling project rather than yet another harebrained plot for world conquest: the planned transformation of the metropole and its colonies into a chain of interlocked and potentially limitless zones of economic growth. According to

[13] Claude-Marie Raudot, "Deux intendants de colonie sous Louis XIV: économistes sans le savoir," *Journal des économistes: Revue mensuelle de l'économie politique, des questions agricoles, manufacturières et commerciales*, vol. 37 (1853): 355-357.

[14] Early historians, following Charlevoix's lead, celebrated Raudot as a capable administrator whose scheme aimed to lift the fortunes of New France. François-Xavier Garneau, *Histoire du Canada: depuis sa découverte jusqu'à nos jours* (Québec: Lamoureux, 1859 ed.), t. II: 66-68; Richard Brown, *A History of the Island of Cape Breton* (London: Low, Son, and Marston, 1869); Francis Parkman, *France and England in North America* (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1899 ed.), vol. II: 186-188; J. S. McLennan, *Louisbourg: From its Foundation to its Fall, 1713-1758* (London: Macmillan, 1918), 9-10. More recently, historians have used Raudot's memorandum to paint a portrait of New France or Cape Breton in the early eighteenth century, to explain the founding of Île Royale, or to assess the naval and commercial strategies of Pontchartrain in this period. Dale Miquelon, *New France: 1701-1744: A Supplement to Empire* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1987); Peter Moogk, "Île Royale: The Other New France," *Proceedings of the Meeting of the French Colonial Historical Society*, vol. 21 (1997): 48-49; Christopher Moore, "The Other Louisbourg: Trade and Merchant Enterprise in Île Royale, 1713-1758," *Histoire sociale/Social History*, vol. 12 (May 1979): 79-96; Charles Frostin, *Les Pontchartrain, ministres de Louis XIV: Alliances et réseau d'influence sous l'Ancien Régime* (Rennes: Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2006), 411-468; Brian Tennyson and Roger Sarty, *Guardian of the Gulf: Sydney, Cape Breton, and the Atlantic Wars* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000), 13-14. In his entry on Raudot in the *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, Donald Horton briefly acknowledges the innovative strategic thinking contained in the intendant's proposals. Horton, "Antoine-Denis Raudot," *Dictionary of Canadian Biography Online* (1982).

Raudot, a reformed overseas trade centered on the Cape Breton entrepôt was the key to "unblocking" the latent commercial power of France's New World dominions.

Raudot's ideas, developed first in his memorandum and then elaborated in a flurry of letters and reports written between 1706 and 1710, established a lasting tradition of imagining overseas colonies as part of a closed economic circuit in which state administrators, with the right principles in mind, could intervene to foster integration, capture global markets, and create the conditions for endless profit.[15] The appeal of his proposal depended in part on the ways in which he and his readers linked together heightened geopolitical anxieties with new attitudes about commercial expansion and the role of government in promoting it. The implementation of his project represented an extraordinary confluence of administrative and mercantile concerns, of the politics of empire, privilege, and economic planning. Unlike so many other bureaucratic schemes, Raudot's memorandum had an enduring effect on how contemporaries measured and described the stakes of colonization, and it gave ammunition to those who wished to reform the commercial and imperial strategies of France and Great Britain.

Raudot's ideas help us to form a bridge between two distinct periods of economic thought. Under Colbert and his immediate successors, most commentators believed that states should promote domestic industry and a favorable balance of trade in order to acquire as much silver and gold as possible, since precious metals

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[15] Historians of Spain and Great Britain in the eighteenth century are currently investigating the origins of this line of political economic thought in those empires. Fidel Tavarez, "The Commercial Machine: Reforming Imperial Commerce in the Spanish Atlantic, ca. 1740-1808" (PhD dissertation: Princeton University, 2016); S. Max Edelson, *The New Map of Empire: How Britain Imagined America Before Independence* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2017). My thanks to both authors for sharing and discussing their work with me.

were taken to be the foundation of national wealth; in a world whose riches were finite, they reasoned, colonies offered a competitive advantage, furnishing raw materials to their mother countries while serving as markets for their finished goods.[16] Known retrospectively as "mercantilism," this loose constellation of ideas remained a robust presence in eighteenth-century politics even as it encountered growing opposition from merchants, magistrates, and *philosophes* who saw the wealth of nations as a potentially boundless product of natural laws, civilizational "*moeurs*," or individual enterprise and consumption—not the actions of states.[17] The sinuous path from *Colbertisme* to liberalism deserves further investigation.[18] So, for that matter, do the state-centered approaches to political economy that persisted despite (and within) the lively Enlightenment debates over free trade, luxury, and *doux commerce* that have received so much attention from scholars.[19] As fodder for intellectual

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[16] The seminal study of mercantilism is Eli Heckscher, *Mercanilism* (London: Allen and Unwen, 1935). The framework has recently come under renewed scrutiny. See Philip Stern and Carl Wennerlind, eds., *Mercantilism Reimagined: Political Economy in Early Modern England and its Empire* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2013).

[17] See, for example, Liana Vardi, *The Physiocrats and the World of the Enlightenment* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2012); Gilbert Faccarello, ed., *Studies in the History of French Political Economy: From Bodin to Walras* (New York: Routledge, 1998), 1-227; Anoush Terjanian, *Commerce and its Discontents in Eighteenth-Century French Political Thought* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2012); John Shovlin, *The Political Economy of Virtue: Luxury, Patriotism, and the Origins of the French Revolution* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2007); Henry C. Clark, *Compass of Society: Commerce and Absolutism in Old-Regime France* (New York: Lexington Books, 2007); J. G. A. Pocock, *Virtue, Commerce, and History: Essays on Political Thought and History, Chiefly in the Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1985); David Wootton, ed., *Republicanism, Liberty, and Commercial Society, 1649-1776* (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 1994).

[18] Gail Bossenga, *The Politics of Privilege: Old Regime and Revolution in Lille* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2002); Philippe Minard, *La fortune du colbertisme: État et industrie dans la France des Lumières* (Paris: Fayard, 1998); Simone Meyssonnière, *La balance et l'horloge. La genèse de la pensée libérale en France au XVIIIe siècle* (Montreuil: Éditions Montreuil, 1989); David Todd, *L'identité économique de la France: Libre-échange et protectionnisme, 1814-1851* (Paris: Grasset & Fasquelle, 2008).

[19] In their haste to find the origins of laissez-faire liberalism or to reconstruct the debates over luxury consumption and *doux commerce*, scholars have tended to portray the eighteenth-century monarchy as an ossified relic of "the age of mercantilism," a gormless dupe of financial con-artists, or an aggressive but ill-fated enemy of free or clandestine trade. Such portrayals leave little room for innovative

history, Raudot's speculations about the impact of royal intervention upon commercial decline and progress allow us to track how the meanings of "mercantilism" were being reworked at a transitional moment.

Yet on another, deeper level, Raudot's proposal reveals how new economic ideas became embedded in crown policy and administration—from the workaday hum of affairs on the ground to the very summit of the state. A pronounced commercial sensibility had inflected royal governance since at least the 1660s, when Colbert and his most enterprising clients, such as the Arnoul, had mobilized merchant habits of accounting and reportage to achieve unprecedented control over the chronically fractious fleets, ports, and provinces of the realm (Chapter 1).[20] Raudot's case shows that state approaches to overseas empire were fundamentally recast in one of the hottest political crucibles of the age. Between 1689 and 1713, a protracted demographic and military crisis brought Europe's leading superpower to its knees and provoked sweeping calls for fiscal and economic reform, just as the burgeoning trade

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thinking to emerge from within the state. Whether drawing upon the new social and cultural practices of the period, or scrutinizing the printed works of recognizably "modern" thinkers such as François Quesnay and the Physiocrats, they overlook a great deal of evidence that the Old Regime monarchy could and did intervene aggressively to promote commercial and industrial growth, and that many contemporaries believed that it should. For some important recent correctives that take seriously the dynamic and varied state responses to commercial expansion, free-market thought, and new patterns of consumption in this period, see Findlay and O'Rourke, *Power and Plenty: Trade, War, and the World Economy in the Second Millenium* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007), 143-260; Cheney, *Revolutionary Commerce: Globalization and the French Monarchy* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010); Kwass, *Contraband: Louis Mandrin and the Making of a Global Underground* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2014). On the continuing public appeal of state-oriented frameworks of political economy in eighteenth-century Europe, see Sophus Reinert, *Translating Empire: Emulation and the Origins of Political Economy* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011) and the contributions by David Kammerling Smith, Simone Meyssonnier, Loïc Charles, and Julian Swann in *Le cercle Vincent de Gournay: savoirs économiques et pratiques administratives en France au milieu du XVIIIe siècle*, eds. Loïc Charles, Frédéric Lefebvre, and Christine Théré (Paris: Institut National d'Études Démographiques, 2011), 31-131. On the Old Regime monarchy as a successful promoter of economic growth through selective regulation, see Jeff Horn, *Economic Development in Early Modern France: The Privilege of Liberty, 1650-1820* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2015).

[20] On Colbert's central role in this development, see Soll, *Information Master*; on the Arnoul, see Chapter 1.

of its rivals seemed to be leaving France behind. In the long run, as historians have shown, the pressure produced no radical changes in government, only an unwieldy, opaque, and staunchly traditional system of state finances with zero royal accountability and, consequently, few mechanisms capable of generating the revenues needed to pursue commerce and warfare on a global scale.[21] Nonetheless, the history of Raudot's scheme suggests that the dreadful hardships of these years could give rise to momentous shifts in administrative ideas and practices of wealth-making. Given wide reign over the affairs of one ruined colony, he sought to reform France's entire empire in a conscious bid to extract tremendous untapped value from improved relationships between the colonies and the metropole, merchants and the crown, profit margins and public order. Beyond allowing us to nuance the overdrawn opposition between free-trade liberalism and regulatory mercantilism, his experience reveals how royal officials absorbed the harsh lessons of the time to reimagine and then to remake France's notoriously impecunious colonies as a single commercial dynamo, one whose guiding administrative principles would continue to hold sway for much of the century.

Insisting that Raudot's memorandum was about bringing a new sort of commercial logic to the governance of France's large, diverse, and listless empire invites several questions: Why have other scholars not noticed the core "utility," or value, of his proposal to the Crown? To what extent did his ideas reflect earlier efforts, such as De Meulles's, to think about colonial development in broadly strategic terms? Why did his scheme resonate with his superiors in 1706, and with

[21] Gail Bossenga, "Financial Origins of the French Revolution," in Thomas Kaiser and Dale Van Kley, eds., *From Deficit to Deluge: The Origins of the French Revolution* (Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, 2011), 37-66.

audiences in Europe and America for decades afterward? The four sections of this chapter offer some answers to these questions. The first and second sections introduce Antoine-Denis Raudot and the political and economic settings of France and Canada in the early eighteenth century. He conceived his proposal to satisfy the specific needs of a particular moment, so understanding the immediate context of its production and reception is crucial. It helps to identify some of the administrative anxieties of his superiors that he ably addressed in his writings. The third section provides a close study of the "Memorandum." It makes clear that Raudot saw a thorough reformation of both Canadian society and French colonial trade as essential to the long-term survival of France's New World empire. The final section offers a sequential reading of his revisions to the project between 1706 and 1710, in order to preserve the dynamic back-and-forth between Raudot, Pontchartrain, and agents of the ministry as they responded to rapidly shifting strategic and material concerns. To highlight the mutual influence of administrative ideas and practices, I place their debate against the backdrop of the intendant's vigorous efforts to remake the commercial complexion of New France. In the conclusion I examine Raudot's role in implementing the scheme after his return to France, before comparing some of the reprintings and translations of his memorandum from the 1740s and 1750s against the original. I underscore a phenomenon rarely acknowledged by colonial historians: the abiding influence of experienced and expert administrators after their return from service abroad. At the same time, I show that the administrative calculus underpinning Raudot's plan had lasting consequences for the way European officials

perceived Cape Breton and the political economy of empire in the eighteenth-century Atlantic world.

"One Great Poorhouse": France, 1689-1713

Antoine-Denis Raudot led a long and prolific career in public life that spanned some of the most dismal and dynamic decades in the history of Old Regime France. And yet, for a man who reached the upper echelons of the king's service in his early twenties and stayed there for nearly forty years, very little has been written about him.[22] Descended from a Burgundian family of lawyers and tax farmers, he benefited from kinship ties with the Pontchartrains to obtain successive appointments in the Royal Marine, first as a scrivener and clerk at Dunkirk (1699-1704), then as co-intendant of New France (1705-1710) with his irascible father, Jacques, a longtime judge in the kingdom's principal tax court, the Cour des Aides. In Canada, he and his father split their duties: Jacques handled judicial affairs and matters of public order, while Antoine-Denis tackled the colony's nettlesome finances. In less than five years, the good services and powerful connections of Raudot *fils* secured his promotion back to France, where he oversaw naval enlistments, the wounded, and the coast guard, and served as an advisor on colonial affairs at court. His additional charge as head secretary of the Maison du Roi in 1713 brought him into the rarefied air of the king's household. The momentary political decentralization that followed Louis XIV's death two years later only amplified his influence, initially as a director

[22] The only modern biographical study of Raudot that I am aware of is in Jean-Claude Dubé, *Les intendants de la Nouvelle-France* (Montréal: Fides, 1984), 71-73, 134-136, 148, 158, 170, 235. As far as Raudot is known to historians, it is mainly in his capacity as intendant of New France—a post that occupied only four years of a forty-year career. Horton, "Antoine-Denis Raudot," *Dictionary of Canadian Biography Online* (1969); Claude-Marie Raudot, *Deux intendants du Canada* (Paris: Perriquet et Rouillé, 1854).

of the Compagnie d'Occident, then as a councilor on the regent's Conseil de la Marine, and finally, under Louis XV, as a director of the mighty Compagnie des Indes. Raudot died at Versailles in 1737, unmarried and childless, eccentrically leaving behind to his servants the entirety of an estate that included nearly 200,000 pounds, 140 bottles of Caribbean liquors, a share in a coffee and tobacco plantation at Cayenne, an extensive collection of exotic maps and curiosities, and over two-thousand volumes of books on "History and diverse subjects."[23]

Raudot's appointments gave him considerable authority over French commercial policy and administration. His portfolio as a director of two colossal trading companies and a member of the Conseil de la Marine attests to the breadth of his labors. In 1719 alone, his assignments included the West Indies, Louisiana, Senegal, the Africa Company, the tobacco and salt monopolies, customs duties on American goods, and the management of the Five Great Farms responsible for collecting royal taxes, as well as correspondence with the French towns and provinces of Châlons, Charleville, Saint Quentin, Soissons, Languedoc, La Rochelle, Guyenne, Metz, Sedan, Provence, Dauphiné, Riom, Limoges, Burgundy, Bresse, and Franche-Comté.[24] Each week, he and his fellow councilors met to advise the regent on the

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[23] At its peak in the 1720s, his fortune probably hovered around 500,000 pounds. Dubé, *Intendants*, 134-136, 148, 235; Dubé, "Les intendants de la Nouvelle-France et la République des Lettres," *Revue d'histoire de l'Amérique française*, vol. 29, no. 1 (1978): 41-44; Archives Départementales de la Seine-et-Oise, Notaires, 2 August 1737. On Raudot's cabinet of curiosities, see the undated "Collections confisquées au prince de Condé à Chantilly. Transfert du cabinet d'Antoine-Denis Raudot à Chantilly," Archives Nationales, AJ 15, vol. 836, dossier 6, caisse B, f. 1, summarized in Benoît Roux, "Les collections royales d'Amériques du sud au musée du quai Branly: (En)quêtes d'archives autour des pièces amazoniennes et caraïbes d'Ancien Régime" (Paris: Musée du quai Branly, 2012), 39-40.

[24] *Départements des Messieurs les directeurs de la Compagnie des Indes, en conséquence de leur déliberation du 2 octobre 1719* (Paris: Saugrain & Prault, 1719), 2-3, 5-7; *Le Nouveau Mercure*, November 1719, 104-110; Marcel Giraud, *Histoire de la Louisiane française* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1966-1974), vol. III: 48 and vol. IV: 32, 35.

kingdom's trade as a whole. His work put him on familiar terms with some of France's leading economic thinkers, including François Quesnay, the court physician whose writings laid the foundations of Physiocracy, and John Law, the Scottish adventurer whose ill-fated "System" of financial reforms enriched a handful of speculators (including Raudot) and ruined countless others.[25] It also made him known—and odious—to many subjects, at least by name: for a time his signature appeared on every piece of cotton that entered France legally, part of the Compagnie des Indes's rapidly growing and ever more ruthless campaign to stamp out competition from foreign or smuggled imports.[26] Although consistently engaged with matters of trade and taxation, he never elaborated his own formal system of economics; apart from the posthumous life of his memorandum, he never published a word. His thinking was confined to the paperwork generated by his daily duties, and it responded to the practical administrative problems that confronted him in France and North America.

Raudot's Cape Breton project reached his superiors with special force because it arrived amidst increasingly anguished calls for economic reform in the metropole itself. Indeed, material scarcity and military defeat made the last quarter century of Louis XIV's reign one long Calvary for the kingdom: except for a brief respite between 1697 and 1701, France suffered a virtually unbroken plague of harsh winters,

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[25] A lady-in-waiting for Louis XV's mistress, Madame de Pompadour, recalled a joke Quesnay once told about Raudot, who, according to Quesnay, "amused himself by speaking ill of medicine and physicians." "I wrote these lines to avenge Asclepius and Hippocrates," he claimed: "Antoine se médicina / En décriant la médecine, / Et de ses propres mains mina / Les fondements de sa machine; / Très rarement il opina / Sans humeur bizarre ou chagrine, / Et l'esprit qui le domina / Etait affiché sur sa mine." François Quesnay, *Ouevres économiques et philosophiques de François Quesnay*, ed. Auguste Oncken (Frankfurt: Baer, 1888), 120-121.

[26] Joseph du Fresne de Francheville, *Histoire de la Compagnie des Indes* (Paris: Bure, 1738), 118-119, 351. On the campaign waged against smuggling by the Compagnie and the crown, see Kwass, *Contraband*.

failed harvests, and ruinous wars that all but crippled its agriculture, while foreign privateering, rampant speculation, and runaway prices brought trade to a standstill. Marriage and birth rates plummeted, infant mortality surged, and in the famine years 1692-1694 alone perhaps 2.8 million people—or 15% of the population—perished from dearth or disease. Nearly another million froze or starved to death during the "Siberian" winter of 1709-1710. At the height of the crisis, onlookers deplored the wretched state of the king's subjects, who were reduced to eating everything from cats and carrion to slugs and seed corn. Peasants roamed the countryside for dozens and sometimes hundreds of miles in search of food. Every day, people and livestock dropped dead on the roads, to be hauled away by corpsebearers or picked clean by crows "down to the lips." Beggars swarmed the well-to-do wherever they went. In Paris and Versailles, where the price of bread rose more than tenfold, desperate crowds attacked officials and pillaged the homes and shops of suspected hoarders.[27] "It would not be wise to flatter ourselves," Lieutenant General of Police d'Argenson warned ominously, "the privation of the people is endless."[28]

For administrators whose duty was to bring men and goods together in an orderly, predictable fashion that would ensure public tranquility, the sight of bread riots in the towns and bleached bones on the roadways showed just how fragile—and flawed—France's economy was. Some of the suffering could be attributed to acts of

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[27] For the dire effects of the kingdom's economic crisis, see Pierre Goubert, *Louis XIV and Twenty Million Frenchmen*, trans. Anne Carter (New York: Random House, 1972), 215-226, 254-263, 267-268; Colin Jones, *The Great Nation: France from Louis XV to Napoleon, 1715-1799* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), 52-59; Jacques Saint-Germain, *La vie quotidienne en France à la fin du Grand Siècle* (Paris: Hachette, 1965), 177-190; Liselotte von der Pfalz, *A Woman's Life in the Court of the Sun King: Letters of Liselotte von der Pfalz, Elisabeth Charlotte, Duchesse d'Orléans, 1652-1722*, ed. and trans. Elborg Forster (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1984), 174-180.
[28] D'Argenson to Desmaretz, 1710, quoted in Saint-Germain, *La vie quotidienne*, 179-181.

God, but officials increasingly blamed the kingdom's woes on man-made political failures. Diplomatic isolation, military requisitioning, ramshackle infrastructure, chronic indebtedness, ruthless profiteering, institutional paralysis, and squabbling among authorities hamstrung relief efforts at every turn. "It is virtually impossible to bring together men who are even more divided by their maxims than by the natural antipathy of the corps from which they come," d'Argenson grumbled, "The magistrates want to regulate everything, and the merchants want to leave everything free."[29] The people's misery was compounded by a fiscal regime that critics decried with mounting frustration as rigid, unjust, and outmoded. Taxes of all kinds fell disproportionately on the poor, who could no longer provide the resources necessary to keep Louis's armies in the field. Predictably, evasion rates soared, royal receipts plunged, and to stave off bankruptcy the crown engaged in colossal borrowing, erratic currency manipulations, and the mass sale of new venal offices. For all its creative accounting and "extraordinary measures," by 1715, the state's debt would swell to a staggering 3.5 billion pounds, with 70-80% of revenues devoted to servicing it.[30]

The appalling material conditions of the kingdom provided reformers with problems in need of solutions. The lopsided distribution of suffering between elites and the downtrodden had never been more visible, and it led critics to question the fundamental workings of wealth and privilege—workings which the king's moral and political authority obliged him to improve. Scandalized moralists and magistrates publicly blamed his belligerent diplomacy and regressive taxation for transforming

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[29] D'Argenson, 1709, quoted in Saint-Germain, *La vie quotidienne*, 198.

[30] On state debt at the end of Louis XIV's reign, see Philip T. Hoffman, Gilles Postel-Vinay, and Jean-Laurent Rosenthal, *Priceless Markets: The Political Economy of Credit in Paris, 1660-1870* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 70-71.

the realm into "one great poorhouse." "The people believe you have no pity for their sufferings, that you care only for your own power and glory," admonished the cleric and royal tutor François Fénelon in an open letter to Louis, "Rather than take money from your poor people, you ought to feed and cherish them."[31] The provincial judge Pierre de Boisguilbert chided the crown for allowing tax farmers and excisemen to fleece the peasantry while the wealthy paid nothing.[32] The Marquis de Vauban, who felt himself "obliged by my honor and my conscience" to speak out, begged Louis to reform his finances so that "the common people...who have always suffered the most and who still suffer the most" would shoulder a lighter share of the burden.[33] Vauban claimed to speak for those who could not speak for themselves, but ordinary men and women manifested their own outrage by leading labor strikes, food riots, and tax revolts that further destabilized the realm in these years.[34]

As prominent reformers, Fénelon, Boisguilbert, and Vauban agreed on the need for change, yet they clashed over the best means to place France's economy on a firm footing. Expressed in a small but incendiary group of texts printed between 1695 and 1707, their differences stemmed from fundamental disagreements about wealth creation and the proper role of the state in economic affairs. Fénelon, like a long line of Christian agrarians before him, counseled a rejection of the money economy and a return to farming as the source of plenty. All wars were unjust, he argued, and the commercial profits that funded and occasioned them led otherwise

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[31] François de Salignac de La Mothe-Fénelon, "Letter to Louis XIV (c. 1695)," in *Selected Writings*, ed. and trans. Chad Helms, (New York: Paulist Press, 2006), 201-202.
[32] Pierre Le Pesant de Boisguilbert, *Le détail de la France* (1695).
[33] Sébastien Le Preste de Vauban, *Projet d'un dixme royal* (1707), preface.
[34] William Beik, *Urban Protest in Seventeenth-Century France: The Culture of Retribution* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 145-146.

godly subjects to abandon the land in favor of luxuries.[35] If the king's duty was to promote the well-being of his "children," then he should leave them free to obey a divine order grounded in the pious cultivation of the soil. International trade should be encouraged, but only insofar as it maintained peace among nations and did not distract from agriculture. Although Fénelon offered no unified theory of production and exchange, he sketched a fiscal-economic vision of retrenchment that some reformers found compelling: abolishing wartime levies would allow the people to enjoy once again "the bread that they earn by the sweat of their brow," thus fostering prosperity, the payment of just taxes, and the redemption of sin.[36]

By contrast, Boisguilbert stressed markets over morals and the purchasing power of peasant-proprietors over the salvation of souls. The crown had become so fixated on accumulating gold and silver, he claimed, that it had neglected the true wealth embodied by consumer goods. To his mind, precious metals were "false idols" with no intrinsic value ("neither to feed a man, nor to clothe him"), but rather functioned as tools of exchange that merely symbolized the real riches provided by foodstuffs. If the king would simply obey the "natural order" of things—by lowering or lifting internal duties and allowing grain to circulate freely within the realm—the

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[35] Here Fénelon cited the Dutch War of 1672 in particular as "the source of all the others." The conflict, which had arisen in large part out of competition for commercial supremacy, prompted Louis and Colbert to decree a high tariff on imports in 1667 that provoked a lasting trade war between the two powers. "All the merchants in the realm recognize that the decadence of our trade and of our manufactures began with the tariff of 1667," observed François Le Blanc, historiographer to the dauphin, in 1697. Le Blanc, "Lettre de Mr Le Blanc sur le commerce," quoted in Lionel Rothkrug, *Opposition to Louis XIV: The Political and Social Origins of French Enlightenment* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1965),, 284.

[36] Fénelon, "Letter to Louis XIV"; *Télémaque*. For more on Fénelon's agrarian ideals and how they fit alongside other economic visions of the period (including Boiguilbert's and Vauban's), see David McNally, *Political Economy and the Rise of Capitalism: A Reinterpretation* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1990), 75-76 and Amy S. Wyngaard, *From Savage to Citizen: The Invention of the Peasant in the French Enlightenment* (Newark, DE: University of Delaware Press, 2004), 27-29; Rothkrug, *Opposition*, 391.

economy would stabilize itself. General enrichment, healthy consumption, and a robust fisc would follow. In boon years, the kingdom could even sell off its surplus crops to meet demand abroad (foreign imports, meanwhile, would be heavily taxed). Boisguilbert was far from laissez-faire: he intended his reforms to enrich the government, not shrink it, and to implement them he called for vigorous royal action to steamroll entrenched opposition. But in the long run he envisioned something like a liberal, market-driven economy for France, which is why he would later be touted as an intellectual precursor to Quesnay and the physiocrats.[37]

Vauban's ideas were simpler yet even more radical. Believing that Boisguilbert's tax cuts did not go far enough, he called on the king to adopt a fundamentally new "system" of finances.[38] In exchange for military protection, he argued, all subjects owed the crown taxes according to their means, not their position in society. From this "fundamental maxim," he proposed replacing France's dense thicket of impositions with a single tax, the *dîme royale*, levied solely in proportion to wealth. To compute and collect it, he contrived a military-style bureaucracy armed with exhaustive census and survey data. Eschewing the traditional categories of "noble" and "commoner," privileged and not, he sorted the king's subjects into

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[37] Boisguilbert, *Détail de la France, sous le regne présent* (1695); *Traité sur la nature des richesses, de l'argent et des tributs* (1707); *Les causes de la rareté de l'argent* (1707); *Le Factum de la France* (1707); *Supplément au factum de la France* (1707). These works were reprinted multiple times throughout the eighteenth century. The notion that Boisguilbert was the intellectual forerunner of economic liberals such as the physiocrats and Adam Smith lives on in modern-day scholarship as well as conservative think-tank culture. For a recent example, see Félix Cadet, *Pierre de Boisguilbert, précurseur des économistes* (Paris: Institut Coppet, 2014). My analysis of Boisguilbert's and Vauban's fiscal-economic proposals owes a debt to Michael Kwass, *Privilege and the Politics of Taxation in Eighteenth-Century France: Liberté, Égalité, Fiscalité* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2006 ed.), 224-231 and McNally, *Political Economy*, 78-83.

[38] Vauban read Boisguilbert's works and even cited them in his *Projet*. Boisguilbert had written him several letters in 1704, which the Maréchal passed on to Desmaretz, noting that "Sometimes the most foolish men give good advice to the wisest." Vauban to Desmaretz, 26 August 1704, reproduced in Antoine de Boislisle, ed., *Correspondance des contrôleurs généraux des finances avec les intendants des provinces* (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1874), t. II: 545.

shades of rich and poor, whose respective contributions could be assessed to the last decimal. The marquis was no theorist of markets, and he drew no special distinction between commercial and agricultural wealth, but he predicted that the *dîme* would have important economic effects: under its rational dominion, the price of salt and other necessities would fall by half, the crown would receive a "certain and sufficient revenue," and the realm would flourish thanks to "the improved cultivation of the land."[39]

The king's ministers studied and even admired some of the solutions proposed by their critics, but they were besieged daily by audience-seekers touting all manner of wild schemes, and in the midst of war and financial collapse they were unwilling to contemplate lowering taxes or withdrawing the government from economic affairs.[40] In 1691, when Boisguilbert received an audience with Controller-General of Finances Louis de Pontchartrain (Jérôme's father), the judge begged him to listen patiently to his proposal, because, he promised, "at first [Pontchartrain] would take him for a fool, [but] then he would see that his plan deserved attention, and finally he would approve his system wholeheartedly." The minister burst out laughing, told him he preferred to keep his first impression, and coldly turned his back, abruptly ending the interview.[41]

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[39] Vauban, *Dîme royale*.

[40] The papers of Controller-General of Finances Louis de Pontchartrain (1689-1699) abound in harebrained proposals to rescue France's trade. "Monseigneur," wrote one small-town physician named Blondet, "on my way to treat a soldier at Ambleteuse and passing along the coast, I thought of two or three ways to bring back the prosperity of trade, which I take the liberty of sending you. If you find any to your taste, I ask no other recompense than a position for my son..." An apothecary named Gaschet sent two long and almost unintelligible memoranda, one of which he said was written by another apothecary more than two decades before. Quoted in Rothkrug, *Opposition to Louis XIV*, 418n107.

[41] Saint-Simon, *Mémoires*, t. X: 28-35. Pontchartrain's successors as controller-general of finances, Michel Chamillart and Nicolas Desmaretz, studied both Boisguilbert's and Vauban's ideas and acknowledged their merits, but did not implement them. See Boisguilbert's letters to Desmaretz,

Royal officials were even less inclined to entertain direct public attacks on their policies and the patchwork of privilege that underpinned them. (In the end, the writings of Fénelon, Vauban, and Boisguilbert were harshly condemned, and all three men were banished into exile.) They were not averse to innovation, but their credibility depended upon the backing of financiers whose fortunes derived from precisely the sort of predatory lending, tax farming, and wartime profiteering that critics blamed for exacerbating the crisis.[42] In a regime run by and for the wealthy and well bred, any reform that aimed to reduce the king's spending or the immediate gains of the powerful in favor of the long-term recovery of the peasant millions was, as Pontchartrain confirmed, a fool's errand.

Where abstract laws of God and nature enjoined the king to guide the economy with a light hand, then, the pressing needs of the fiscal-military state demanded a mailed fist. Facing disaster, Louis's ministers opted for more intervention, not less, and higher taxes, not lower. (Louis himself, whose royal touch reportedly cured more than 350,000 victims of scrofula during the course of his reign, otherwise took a hands-off approach to the suffering of his subjects, who greeted his death in 1715 with a collective sigh of relief.[43]) Between 1689 and 1715, the government arbitrarily changed the value of coin nearly forty times. In 1695, it introduced a head tax, or *capitation*, graduated according to rank, and fiercely

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whom he had known when the controller-general was intendant of Rouen, in Boislisle, *Correspondance*, t. II: 524-545.

[42] McCollim, *Louis XIV's Assault*, 146-150; Guy Rowlands, *The Financial Decline of a Great Power: War, Influence, and Money in Louis XIV's France* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2012), CITE. The importance of individual financiers to the ministers is exemplified by the relationship between Samuel Bernard and Chamillart. As soon as Bernard declared bankruptcy in 1709, after funding nearly all foreign transactions associated with the war effort for the previous five years, Chamillart's political credit collapsed. Jones, *The Great Nation*, 58-59.

[43] Peter Burke, *The Fabrication of Louis XIV*, 43; Goubert, *Louis XIV*, 276.

opposed by the aristocracy. In 1701, the new controller-general of finances, Michel Chamillart, forced into circulation a form of paper money, which subsequently collapsed for lack of credit. Meanwhile the crown imposed new duties on luxury items ranging from powdered wigs to playing cards. In the final years of the war, Chamillart's successor, Nicolas Desmaretz, closed numerous loopholes and decreed a universal income tax, the *dixième*, hoping to squeeze yet more money out of otherwise privileged subjects (many of whom paid dearly for exemptions in what amounted to a government shakedown scheme). Desmaretz was inspired in part by Vauban's *dîme*, but instead of cutting other taxes, he simply added the *dixième* to the rest—increasing rather than lifting the burden on the poor.[44] Saint-Simon lamented the bitter irony of it: "You see how in France one must guard against the most just and useful intentions...this is a terrible lesson to put an end to even the best proposals in the realms of finance and taxation."[45]

Glory and Profit

The radical ideas of Vauban, Fénelon, and Boisguilbert have received a great deal of scholarly attention, but for some powerful contemporaries, the means to restore French *grandeur* lay neither in a diminished fiscal state nor in a return to the land, but rather in aggressive action far beyond the kingdom's borders—in Asia, Africa, and the Americas. Despite the privations and hardships of the times, the horizons of French commerce expanded enormously in these years, encompassing new ventures in the Far East and the South Seas as well as ever greater shipments of

[44] McCollim, *Louis XIV's Assault*, 138-145; Jones, *Great Nation*, 55-57.
[45] Saint-Simon, *Mémoires*, t. X: 35.

African slaves and American coffee, tobacco, sugar, and indigo. By the Peace of Ryswick of 1697, France reclaimed Acadia and Pondichéry, acquired Saint-Domingue, and regained access to the world's shipping lanes. In 1698 alone, the first year after the Peace of Ryswick, the merchants of Saint-Malo sailed a dozen vessels to the Antilles, more than in the previous six years combined, while their counterparts in Nantes sent forty-two, twice as many as the year before.[46] That same year the *Amphitrite* departed on what would become France's first successful trading voyage to China. Administrators predicted with growing conviction that supremacy in Europe would henceforth hinge on access to overseas markets and commodities. In debating how the king should manage this burgeoning global trade, they reconsidered the relationship of the crown to the ports and the metropole to its colonies.

To an unprecedented extent, officials were joined by leading members of the merchant community, who took on a much greater voice in government during these decades. The merchants' rising influence was a direct function of the state's dependence upon them: many had Protestant connections abroad, and during the wars royal ministers relied on them to secure much-needed grain shipments, naval stores, and foreign loans. Crucially, too, they lent their expertise to aristocratic officials who felt unprepared to negotiate the commercial provisions of peace treaties at Ryswick and Utrecht (1713). "I beg you to confer immediately with the merchants," Pontchartrain instructed the intendant at La Rochelle, Michel Bégon, in 1697,

> If we permit the entry of foreign merchandise...in order to obtain foreign markets for French products, will the Advantage thus earned be reciprocal and equal on one side and on the other? Will not the kingdom's trade

[46] Goubert, *Louis XIV*, 225.

> suffer too considerably?...I beg you to give me the same advice regarding your proposals for the sale of merchandise from the American colonies to foreign countries, and the most certain and simple methods of considerably increasing trade. I beg you to give me this as promptly as possible and in the greatest detail of which you are capable...You are aware of the extreme urgency of the matter and that there is not a moment to lose.[47]

Under Colbert and Seignelay, the ministry had allowed the merchants little real input on commercial affairs. But now that Pontchartrain was prepared to reconsider the crown's protectionist stance toward overseas trade—a reversal of thirty years of policy and argumentation—he wanted Bégon to sound out those who knew the trade best. In seeking their advice, he seemed to agree with at least one outspoken *négociant* that "to know what is good for commerce, one must have experience of it."[48]

The merchants took advantage of their new influence to obtain the sort of privileged freedoms that had formerly been denied to them. Almost overnight, special requests that had once drawn curt refusals—to ship their merchandise on foreign vessels, for example—began to receive approval. Meanwhile they made a fortune as favored financial go-betweens, charging colossal fees on royal transactions abroad and, with diplomatic cover, selling captured prizes back to the English and the Dutch.[49] Several used their gains to buy shares in the half dozen new or reorganized trading companies that sprouted during the peace of 1697-1701. Their enthusiastic investment heralded a transformation of these exclusive monopolies from the "forced

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[47] Pontchartrain to Bégon, 8 May 1697, ANOM MAR B2, vol. 121, ff. 207-210, quoted in Rothkrug, *Opposition*, 414.
[48] "Mémoire du sieur des Casaux du Hallay, député de Nantes, sur l'état du commerce en général," 4 March 1701, reproduced in Boislisle, *Correspondance*, t. II: 483.
[49] Rothkrug, *Opposition*, 392-419.

service" of the Richelieu and Colbert years into genuine pressure groups whose directors controlled their own stakes and lobbied ministers from a position of strength.[50] In 1700, Louis formalized the merchants' advisory role in policymaking by reviving Colbert's long-defunct Council of Trade and allowing chambers of commerce in Paris and the ports to elect its deputies. Composed of a dozen prominent *négociants* and financiers as well as Chamillart, Superintendant of Commerce Henri d'Aguesseau, and Louis de Pontchartrain's son and successor as minister of the navy, Jérôme, the Council met once per week to discuss the state of trade and to make recommendations to the king.[51] Much like the Renaissance bankers who had once leveraged their wealth and expertise into institutional control over monetary policy, then, the leading merchants of Louis XIV's France positioned themselves to shape the governance of a commercial sphere now considered vital to the kingdom's economic future.[52]

From the start, the deputies raised fundamental questions about France's trade. In a series of memoranda that might better be characterized as *cahiers de doléances*, they debated numerous issues, including the ideal role of the king in commercial affairs (which imports should he tax, when, and how?); the fitness of the French to *la*

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[50] These included the Senegal Company, the Guinea Company, the North Africa Company, the China Company, the East India Company, the South Sea Company, and the Company of Saint-Domingue. Rothkrug, *Opposition*, 392-419; Pierre Boule, "French Mercantilism, Commercial Companies, and Colonial Profitability," in *Companies and Trade: Essays on Overseas Trading Companies during the Ancien Régime*, eds. Leonard Blussé and Femme Gastra (Leiden: Leiden University Press, 1981), 97-117.

[51] Thomas J. Schaeper, *The French Council of Commerce, 1700-1715: A Study of Mercantilism after Colbert* (Columbus, OH: Ohio State University Press, 1983). The original Council of Trade, founded in 1664, had counted only three *négociants* among its members. Annette Smedley-Weill, "La gestion du commerce français au XVIIe siècle: impulsions gouvernementales et besoins des échanges," *Histoire, économie et société*, 12e année, no. 4 (1993): 482-483.

[52] On the transition of Renaissance financiers from informal advisors to officeholders in the king's Cour de Monnaies, see Jotham Parsons, *Making Money in Sixteenth-Century France: Currency, Culture, and the State* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2014).

négoce (were they naturally suited to it, or did mercantile habits need to be inculcated?); and even the ultimate purpose of exchange (was it peace among nations, the enrichment of the state, or the profit of individual entrepreneurs?).[53] The merchant deputies were virtually united, however, in excoriating what they saw as a glaring tension between the crown's ham-fisted regulation of trade, on one hand, and the supple demands of an impatiently globalizing business, on the other. In part they had in mind Colbert's steep foreign tariffs, which had sparked a lasting and disastrous trade war with the Dutch.[54] But they also denounced with particular force the countless internal customs duties, harbor fees, price controls, municipal excises, river and road tolls, venal inspectors, and other impediments France had heaped upon itself to the benefit of no one, it seemed, but a coterie of rapacious tax farmers. (One deputy estimated that transporting merchandise along the Loire from Nantes to Orléans cost 15% of its total value—a figure that did not include the bribes extorted by the farmers' haughty and crooked *commis*, who, "burning with insatiable desire for personal profit," threw up "ready-made pretexts for irritating merchants.") Several others broadened their critique to include the special favors granted to some towns over others. Why should Marseille have an exclusive monopoly over the Levant trade? Why must all imported silk pass through Lyons? Why were Dunkirk and Marseille the only duty-free ports? Why, the deputies from Dunkirk and Saint-Malo

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[53] The merchants' views were solicited in November 1700 by d'Aguesseau, who asked each of them for "a memorandum on the general state of trade." Thomas Schaeper first likened the memoranda to the revolutionary *cahiers*. Schaeper, *The French Council of Commerce*, 53. The memoranda delivered to the Council by the deputies from Rouen, Lyon, Nantes, and Paris are reproduced in Boislisle, *Correspondance*, t. II: 477-504.

[54] "We must retreat from the maxim of M[onsieur] Colbert, who claimed that France could do without the rest of the world," argued Jean Anisson of Lyon, "That would be to go against nature and the decrees of Providence, which has distributed its gifts to each people in order to oblige them...to engage in a mutual traffic with each other." "Mémoire du sieur Anisson, député de Lyon," 4 March 1701, reproduced in Boislisle, *Correspondance*, t. II: 480.

wondered, was direct trade with the West Indies restricted to Rouen, Dieppe, Nantes, Bordeaux, Marseille, and La Rochelle?[55]

The merchants' frustrations led them to voice full-throated calls for freedom of trade. "Liberty is the soul and element of commerce," intoned the Nantais firebrand Descasaux du Hallay, "it excites the genius and application of merchants, who...operate a perpetual movement that produces abundance everywhere. As soon as one bounds the genius of merchants by placing limits upon it, trade is destroyed." Like most of his fellow deputies, he urged Louis to emulate France's English and Dutch rivals, who treated commerce "like the heart of the State" and "have made it a law, which they observe scrupulously, to let complete freedom reign over it." Instead of squeezing money from his merchant subjects, Descasaux argued, the king need only relax his grip, and great riches would come to him through the natural ebbs and flows of exchange: "Wise traders know that by a necessary exit, what goes [eventually] comes back another way, and a movement well observed produces a benefit that remains in the country to enrich he who carries it out."[56]

The stifling proliferation of tariffs, regulations, and exemptions was bad enough, yet several of the deputies reserved their fiercest criticism for another impediment to commercial growth: exclusive trading companies. France's *négociants* were eager to traffic in the rich variety of Asian, African, and American goods they had seen stored in the holds of Dutch and English prizes, from tea and porcelain to ivory, gold, silver, silk, and calicoes. But the monopolies that emerged after 1697, like the royal tax farms, were dominated by court favorites and financiers,

[55] Schaeper, *Council of Commerce*, 55-59.
[56] "Mémoire du sieur des Casaux du Hallay," in Boislisle, *Correspondance*, t. II: 483.

which effectively barred most provincial merchants from these lucrative trades—a loss they felt all the more keenly after 1700, when Spain awarded France's Guinea Company the exclusive right to supply its vast New World colonies with slaves.[57] Deputies from the Atlantic ports bitterly attacked the monopolies as an unnatural constraint upon the entrepreneurial spirit of merchants and, by extension, the kingdom's revenues. "It is a most certain Maxim that nothing but Competition and liberty in Trade can render Commerce beneficial to the State," several fumed, "all Monopolies or Traffic appropriated to Companies exclusive of others are infinitely burdensome and pernicious. What advantage can *France* receive from the Guinea Company?...Will they sacrifice their interests to those of the State?...Will they not rather choose to sell a Negro for 500 livres than 120 or 150?" Some deputies who already held shares in the companies countered that only a privileged monopoly could bring the wealth, stability, and confidence necessary to such new and risky long-distance ventures, but their opponents insisted that a small clique of merchant-bankers and royal hangers-on lacked the incentive to maximize France's share of overseas trade.[58]

In decrying the monopolies as tools of private interest that favored only a privileged few, the deputies identified the public good with the welfare of the merchant community as a whole (which is to say their own), and called on the crown to reform trade to their mutual benefit. In this sense they asked the king to rule much

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[57] Merchants in some of the ports, such as Saint-Malo, were able to participate in these trades as subcontractors of the monopolies. See the chapters devoted to these years in André Lespagnol, *Messieurs de Saint-Malo: Une élite negociante au temps de Louis XIV* (Paris: PUF, 1997), vol. II: 548-702. Descasaux mentioned that seeing the contents of English and Dutch prizes captured during the war had awakened French merchants to the extent and potential of their rivals' overseas trade. "Mémoire du sieur des Casaux du Hallay," in Boislisle, *Correspondance*, t. II: 483.

[58] Boislisle, *Correspondance*, t. II: 418n107, 503.

like the English Parliament professed to do: on behalf of all merchants, rather than a handful of well-connected supplicants.[59] "Private companies were good forty years ago, because back then the notions of overseas commerce were entirely lost in France," Descasaux conceded, "[but now] it is of the utmost importance to lift all exclusions and let freedom reign, for the interest both of the King and of the State." To prove his point, he contrasted the insatiable American demand for slaves with the Guinea Company's incentive to restrict supply. "The fundamental principle of private companies is entirely opposed to the public good, in that it is in their interest to limit their trade to a certain quantity," he explained, "As for the Guinea Company, the indolence of its traffic in slaves...has prevented us from making great progress in the commerce and navigations we have with the peoples of the Americas. It has limited the supply of negroes to these peoples to such an extent that there is not even one-tenth of the number necessary to clear the land [for planting]." Revoking the company's privilege would pave the way for a more robust exchange with Spain's teeming New World colonies, he predicted, which in turn would ensure French dominance in the Americas.[60] In short, he and other like-minded deputies argued that France's renewed capacity for overseas trade, coupled with its newly favored access to Spanish colonial markets, should compel the king to lift all unnecessary restrictions on their commerce, even if it harmed the particular interests of his friends and financial backers.

Such calls for reform were hardly confined to the metropole. France's colonies, too, experienced their share of suffering during these years, and resident

[59] See David Ormrod, *The Rise of Commercial Empires: England and the Netherlands in the Age of Mercantilism, 1650-1770* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2003).
[60] "Mémoire du sieur des Casaux du Hallay," in Boislisle, *Correspondance*, t. II: 494-495.

merchants and officials openly questioned a state of affairs that left them isolated and dependent for their survival on illicit trade with neighboring European settlements. The colonists bristled, moreover, at the customs duties levied by the Domaine d'Occident, one of the Five Great Farms controlled, almost entirely, by Parisian financiers. In 1708, when Intendant Vaucresson asked Martinique's merchants how a mutually profitable trade could be established between France, Canada, and the Caribbean, they unanimously recommended the abolition of all import and export duties between the colonies.[61] Two years later, at Pontchartrain's urging, Vaucresson tallied the accounts of a mock trading voyage for one 250-ton ship sailing from Nantes to the Antilles. After deducting the costs of outfitting and taxation, he found, such a voyage could earn "no profit at all."[62] Vaucresson made no recommendation, but others on the scene concluded that removing the Domaine was the only way to unleash the massive commercial potential of the islands. The Domaine's former director at Martinique, La Brunelière, criticized the farm he had once served in stark terms:

> One must regard colonies as [places] where trade and planting are carried out freely....As for customs duties, they are so opposed to the liberty one has in the islands that as soon as we begin to impose them, the colonists believe that we will establish all the same ones there that we have in France! The inhabitants of the French islands should be treated like their neighbors. Neither offices, nor fees, nor duties are known in the other islands. A perfect liberty reigns there, and the aim of the nations of Europe who have [colonial] settlements is to govern them in a way that makes them useful, that they may extract commodities from them appropriate to their

[61] Vaucresson to Pontchartrain, "Mémoire sur le commerce entre les Iles et le Canada," 1 June 1708, ANOM COL C8B, vol. 2, no. 92.
[62] Vaucresson to Pontchartrain, "Mémoire qui donne une idée de la situation présente du Commerce des Colonies avec le Royaume," 1 April 1710, ANOM COL C8A, vol. 17, ff. 393-395.

> States and to the other nations of Europe. And it is only by leaving these [colonists] free that [states] gain all these advantages.

La Brunelière went on to denounce tax farms and exclusive companies as wholly unsuited to the colonies, warning that if resident planters and merchants were not left free to pursue their interests (as the English and Dutch supposedly were), they would abandon the Americas and ruin the trade of France's Atlantic ports. As rich but fledgling sites of economic activity, he suggested, colonial settlements must not be governed by the sort of bloated fiscal regime that encumbered the metropole. Instead of farming out their trade to monopolies in exchange for a certain but limited return, the crown should liberate them to pursue the potentially limitless profits afforded by free trade with France and, under its aegis, direct competition for European markets.[63]

The irony of such appeals is that the rhetorical link between free trade and the public good had originated not with traders, merchants, or planters, but with the crown itself. In his fiercely contested efforts to reform overseas commerce, Colbert had defended the king as the sole guarantor of commercial liberty. The 1669 edict that proclaimed Marseille a duty-free port, for instance, portrayed Louis as the liberator of a town "overburdened with import and export duties more than any other place in the kingdom, although ours [i.e. the crown's] were not established there." When local civic and commercial leaders opposed the measure, Colbert contrasted the liberal, "universal," and "public"-minded aims of the edict with the "small-minded," short-sighted, and particularistic motives of its overprivileged opponents.[64] He

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[63] La Brunelière, "Mémoire sur le commerce des colonies," 1713, ANOM COL C8B, vol. 23, no. 12.

[64] On the efforts of Colbert and Arnoul to reform and regulate trade in Marseille, see Junko Takeda, *Between Crown and Commerce: Marseille and the Early Modern Mediterranean* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2011), 20-49 (quotes on 33-35).

frequently invoked "freedom" as "the soul of trade"—by which he meant, trade could not flourish in the ways he imagined it should if merchants impeded salutary measures guided by the king's sovereign gaze.[65] His successors understood commercial liberty somewhat differently, but not radically so. For them, as for Colbert, free trade could not be free without royal regulation; for merchants, free trade simply meant freedom from any outside intrusion that damaged their interests.[66]

What turn-of-the-century reformers wanted, then, was not to establish complete liberty of exchange as laissez-faire liberals would later understand it, but instead to make colonial trade a zone of free enterprise within the checkered landscape of royal privilege. In this sense their desires were both novel and utterly familiar: to make the existing system work for them, they asked the king to treat the Atlantic ports and colonies as privileged entrepôts—commercial hubs whose importance to France's welfare merited special consideration.[67] They blended conventional absolutist rhetoric with new utilitarian arguments to rebrand commercial liberty from a public danger to a public good. Despite their fulsome language, however, they were scarcely ideologues. (Several of the same deputies who deplored the abuses and inefficiencies of monopoly companies, including Descasaux, later became enthusiastic shareholders, while merchants who had once villified Colbert as a regulatory *bête noire* invoked him posthumously as a champion of free trade).[68]

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[65] Colbert to Intendant d'Herbigny, 1 September 1671, quoted in Schaeper, *Council of Commerce*, 59; Takeda, *Crown and Commerce*, ibid.

[66] Takeda, *Crown and Commerce*, 20-49; Schaeper, *Council of Commerce*, 53-66.

[67] Their ambitions reflected the achievements of a wide array of entrepreneurs throughout the kingdom—including, notably, the merchants of Marseille—who likewise reaped the benefits of exchanging obedience and collaboration for the "privilege of liberty" from undesirable forms of regulation. See Horn, *Economic Development*, esp. Chapters 4-5.

[68] Schaeper, *The French Council of Commerce*, 51, 66; Takeda, *Crown and Commerce*, 48-49.

The language of deregulation, individual enterprise, and public "utility" resonated with them because it spoke to their hopes and fears for trade at a moment when the older way of describing commerce—as a marginal, vulgar activity that should be rigidly directed by the crown to serve the traditional aims of military glory, public order, and courtly patronage—no longer fit their experiences. They did not need Boisguilbert or Vauban to tell them that royal policy was out of step with economic realities; they could see it all around them and feel it in their pocketbooks. The demand for exotic luxuries and staple goods had risen so dramatically since the mid-seventeenth century that overseas trade appeared capable of enriching individuals and states on a scale unimaginable even a generation before. As a result, it now formed a crucial front in the broader struggle for European supremacy. In the maritime communities where these developments were particularly visible, officials and *négociants* alike increasingly viewed commerce as a force of nature shackled by unnecessary and counterproductive restraints. Pace d'Argenson, magistrates and merchants could agree that when it came to global trade, at least, not everything (or everyone) should be regulated—certainly not in a way that favored Parisian financiers over the vanguard of French commercial expansion.

That circumscribed vision of commercial liberty did not extend beyond the boundaries of the empire. No one in the merchant community or in officialdom called for an end to the *Exclusif*, the exclusive right of the metropole to trade with its overseas possessions. Direct commerce between colonial settlements and foreign powers, although common in practice, was formally proscribed, and would remain so throughout the eighteenth century. All sides believed that colonies existed to

supplement and enhance metropolitan trade, not compete with it (although many colonists would come to see the *Exclusif* as a tyranny equal to the despotism of the trading companies). As Raudot put it, "Colonies should be perceived in relation to the Kingdom that founded them and, consequently, must not engage in any Commerce that could prejudice that Kingdom by drawing to themselves money that would otherwise come to it."[69] What commercial reformers wanted was to create conditions in which the ports and colonies would better enrich themselves as well as the crown. By removing impediments to trade within an imperial framework of exchange, they reasoned, the king could out-compete his European rivals without ceding absolute control over the wealth of his ultramarine dominions. How, exactly, this aim should be achieved was the subject of Raudot's proposal.

Raudot's Solution: The "Memorandum on the Present Affairs of Canada and the Settlement at Cape Breton" (7 August 1706)

When Raudot received his appointment to Canada in January 1705, he had already witnessed firsthand the mighty shifts underway in French political and commercial life. As a naval scribe and commissary at Dunkirk from 1699 to 1704, he saw that town transformed into a duty-free port by order of the king. He would have noticed how local merchants welcomed their new freedom but also struggled to wrest control of their own trade from foreign competitors who eagerly exploited the lifting of customs barriers. He would have observed the foundation of a chamber of commerce—the kingdom's second, after Marseille—which allowed the leading *négociants* to assemble weekly to discuss their business, form partnerships, and

[69] Raudot, "Memoire sur les affaires presentes du Canada, et l'Etablissement du Cap Breton," 7 Aug 1706, Newberry Library, Ayer, ms. 293, vol. 1, f. 11.

represent their grievances to municipal and royal officials. And from his privileged perch along the Canal de Bergues, he would have watched as the outbreak of war in 1702 brought a parade of English and Dutch prizes to France's cradle of corsairs (some 1,600 total by the end of the war, worth an estimated thirty million pounds).[70] The memoranda submitted by Dunkirk's merchants to the Council of Commerce echoed the refrain of other deputies from the ports, calling on the king to liberate them from outside regulations and monopolies in the name of free trade, on one hand, while begging him to protect *their* industry, finance *their* infrastructure projects, and privilege *their* commerce, on the other.[71] For Raudot, who had an extraordinary mandate to review all of the intendant's paperwork and to "act in concert" with him (part of Pontchartrain's effort to train up his young protegé in "every detail of the port"), these years would have provided a crash course in the new and often conflicting demands of commercial governance at the turn of the century.[72]

Whatever lessons he took from his time at Dunkirk, Raudot brought to his new post a studied familiarity with Canada's particular commercial woes. Even before leaving France, he likely joined his father for an interview with two prominent Canadian merchants to discuss the dire state of the beaver trade. Soon afterward, father and son received a post-mortem analysis of the trade submitted to Pontchartrain

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[70] For a comprehensive survey of Dunkirk's trade in this period, see Christian Pfister-Langanay, *Ports, navires et négociants à Dunkerque (1662-1792)* (Dunkirk: Société Dunkerque, 1985). The reported number and value of prizes captured by corsairs and brought to Dunkirk during the war is in Richard Byington, "The Forgotten Service: The French Navy of the Old Regime, 1650-1789" (PhD thesis: Florida State University, 2011), 45.

[71] The memorandum submitted by the Dunkirk Chamber of Commerce to their deputy at Paris, Piécourt, is reproduced in Léonce Baron, "De l'Importance Commerciale du Port de Dunkerque et de la Flandre Maritime au début du XVIIIe siècle," *Bulletin de l'Union Faulconnier*, t. XVIII (1920): 255-284.

[72] Pontchartrain to A.-D. Raudot, 24 July 1704 and 13 August 1704, ANOM COL C11G, vol. 2, ff. 17, 26.

by Denis Riverin, the agent of the colony's fur monopoly in Paris.[73] Riverin was responsible for ordering goods and supplies, leasing warehouse space, and securing loans on behalf of his fellow shareholders; like La Brunelière, he had become disillusioned with the company he served. He concluded from his long experience as a trader and official in New France that the creation of a fur monopoly in 1674 had "caused all of the ills which have afflicted [Canada] for so long": excessive monoculture, perpetual scarcity, chronic indebtedness, boundless cupidity, administrative corruption, unrelenting warfare with the Iroquois, and the scandalous libertinage of the *coureurs de bois*. When royal administrators first arrived in New France in the 1660s, he explained, they had found what appeared to be an endless supply of beaver, and at the time there was such a vogue for felt hats in Europe and Russia that demand, too, seemed infinite. Observers on both sides of the Atlantic quickly came to see North America as a land where the makings of civilization—wealth and industry—were literally carried on the backs of its ubiquitous rodent colonizers (Figure 4). As Raudot himself would later conclude, the result was that "the Colony of Canada was founded upon the Trade in Beaver," which lodged itself ever more tightly in the minds of the French as a "goldmine...that would never run dry."[74]

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[73] Jacques Raudot, at least, received orders to meet with Riverin and Antoine Pascaud in Paris in late February 1705. He was instructed to interview each of them separately and then together in order to learn the true state of the monopoly's finances, which Intendant Beauharnous had been unable to verify due to the disordered bookkeeping of its agents and directors (Pascaud and Riverin among them). "Extraits des Registres concernans les Affaires du Canada," entry for 8 February 1705, Houghton Library, Harvard University, MS Can, vol. 36, p. 175; Pontchartrain to J. Raudot, 28 February 1705 and 25 March 1705, ANOM COL B, vol. 27, ff. 26-26v, 28v.

[74] Denis Riverin, "Memoire historique sur les mauvais Effets de la Reunion des Castors dans une même Main," 12 February 1705, Newberry, Ayer ms. 293, v. I: 169-232; A.-D. Raudot, "Memoire sur les affaires presentes du Canada, et l'Etablissement du Cap Breton," 7 August 1706, Newberry Library, Ayer, ms. 293, vol. 1: 1-3 ("goldmine").

Yet as Riverin pointed out, beaver pelts were not like gold, and New France was no El Dorado. By the early 1670s, fur fever had glutted the market. Officials decided that the only means to lower production and raise prices was to unify the trade under monopoly control, which eventually passed into the hands of the Domaine d'Occident (the same tax farm later denounced by La Brunelière in Martinique). "This," however, "was to fall back on Remedies worse than the Problem." The Domaine, headquartered in Paris, engaged the colonists to collect pelts in exchange for a guarantee to buy them at fixed rates. Far from limiting supply and controlling prices, the promise of payment sparked a frenzy of overproduction that progressively ruined the company, which was obliged to purchase every pelt brought to its storehouse in Québec even as the value of furs collapsed. In 1700, the Domaine's principal backer, Louis Guigues, begged the king to bail him out. The crown agreed to buy more than three million pounds' worth of surplus pelts from Guigues and to mediate a transfer of his monopoly to the colonists, who, led by Riverin, chose to go into business for themselves rather than sell off their own supply at a steep loss. The king's massive purchase temporarily buoyed the price of beaver, but by 1705, the colonists' meager resources had buckled under the combined weight of inherited debt and an oversaturated market.[75]

For Riverin, the epic commercial decline of New France ultimately stemmed from a poverty of theory in its administration. "If the Commerce in Beaver was once the primary purpose of a French Colony in Canada," he argued, "one can say that the bad use we have made of this trade has reduced the colony to the sad state in which

[75] Riverin, "Memoire historique."

we see it today. Naturally, the Beaver were the object of a free Commerce, just like Wool, Silk, furs, and all other goods. At the time we thought there were good reasons to make it exclusive...[but] We mistook ourselves in the principles."[76] Namely, officials had misunderstood both the nature of beaver pelts as a commodity and the behavior of markets. Monopolizing the trade presupposed a "total consumption" of supply that simply could not exist beyond a modest threshold. "Beaver pelts are good for nothing but making Hats," he explained, "if we except the portion sold in Holland each year [and destined] for Muscovy, that is the sole end of their consumption. All that is needed for these two uses is confined to a certain amount that must not be exceeded." The presence of a monopoly had encouraged overproduction where market forces by their nature would have limited supply. In a free market, "This Trade, like others, would have its revolutions—furs would be expensive or cheap in proportion to their quantity and consumption, in response to which each [trader] would take his own measures."[77] Instead of embracing and accounting for those revolutions, the authorities had sought to squelch them, defying inexorable laws of nature that eventually wrought the company's downfall.

Restoring freedom of trade, Riverin argued, would harmonize the fluctuations of supply and demand and provide a panacea to Canada's ills. "The liberty and ease of exchange would inspire Emulation among the merchants," he predicted, "the hope of profit would excite them to undertake Enterprises that would bring abundance to the country and provide it with income from the other goods it produces." More broadly, "order would be restored to all things": the Iroquois would have no reason to

[76] Rivern, "Memoire historique," 169.
[77] Riverin, "Memoire historique," 221-223.

renew hostilities, administrators would no longer treat the trade like their "birthright," France's Native allies would no longer see their women and children suborned by licentious *coureurs de bois*, missionary campaigns would advance, navigation would flourish, and the colonists would take up agriculture, fishing, and ship-building in earnest. Even the French hat trade, "which has visibly fallen off because of the old Furs one is obliged to use in order to get rid of them," would recover thanks to the improved quality of raw material. With England and the Netherlands clearly in mind, Riverin wagered that "if the meanest countries in the world, which produce nothing, are making themselves considerable by the work and industry of the people who inhabit them, we cannot doubt that Canada can become advantageous, producing by itself an infinity of Goods suitable to Trade and the maintenance of its own inhabitants." All that remained "to give them the taste for it" was "to remove the pernicious fixation on beaver by doing away with its [monopoly]."[78]

Riverin's faith in markets took him far from the thinking of men like Raudot. Royal administrators typically harbored an instinctive fear of market forces, which they regarded as antisocial, vicious, and driven by self-interest. Like other aristocrats, they tended to associate free trade with the odious figure of the merchant—a vulgar, vaguely Semitic villain who trampled over the public good in his reckless pursuit of profit. Officials worried that allowing complete liberty of exchange would expose the king's subjects to the predations of such "parasites." Some goods, especially grain and flour, were so fundamental to the people's livelihood (and obedience) that even the slightest hint of hoarding or price gouging could not be risked. In practice, of

[78] Riverin, "Memoire historique," 229-231.

course, authorities saw that excessive regulation stifled commerce, and that some trades permitted more freedom than others; as overseers of the marketplace, they worked to reconcile the merchants' need for liberty with the expectation of consumers to receive certain commodities at a just price. Nonetheless, they took it as axiomatic that commercial problems should be resolved by police measures, not by markets—precisely the opposite of Riverin's position.[79]

From this perspective, Raudot's social background and administrative duties might seem to balance out his immersion in the world of trade enough to make him reject out of hand the sort of market-based solution proposed by Riverin; but in fact these qualities combined to make him unusually capable of seeing commerce and public order as dynamic, interwoven problems, and together they conditioned the creative approach of his "Memorandum" to the sheer desperation that confronted him at Québec.[80] If the intendant arrived to find that "misery and necessity" had finally forced some of the "lazy and frivolous" inhabitants to abandon trapping in favor of planting, he bemoaned the scarcity that left many facing the long and harsh Canadian winter with little to eat and nothing on their backs but tattered deerskins. The country was so "beaten down" that morale had become virtually impossible to lift. Six

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[79] Here I draw upon Steven Kaplan's analysis of tensions between the "market principle" and the "marketplace" in the eighteenth-century grain trade. Steven Kaplan, *Provisioning Paris: Merchants and Millers in the Grain and Flour Trade during the Eighteenth Century* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1984), 23-27. On the anti-semitic valences of commerce in this period, see Francesca Trivellato, "Credit, Honor, and the Early Modern French Legend of the Jewish Invention of Bills of Exchange," *Journal of Modern History*, vol. 84, no. 2 (2012): 289-334 and Derek J. Penslar, *Shylock's Children: Economics and Jewish Identity in Modern Europe* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2001), 11-23.

[80] In this sense, Raudot's background roughly paralleled the "geographical double life" of Montesquieu, whose seemingly contradictory commitments to royal service and aristocratic institutions, on one hand, and the mercantile world of his native Bordeaux, on the other, gave him an outlook capable of reconciling the demands of absolute monarchy and commercial expansion in eighteenth-century France. Cheney, *Revolutionary Commerce*, 74-86.

hundred of its strongest young men remained lost to a life of "savage idleness" in the woods. The military and judicial officers, who should have been paragons of public-mindedness, were flagrantly out for themselves. As for the merchants, he complained, "the envy they have for one another" had almost entirely corroded "the courtesies, friendship, and good faith that are the foundations of commerce." Exploiting the ministry's longstanding jealousy of British prosperity in New England, he unfavorably compared the beggared Canadians with their industrious English neighbors, who "exploit and apply themselves to everything their lands can provide for them, and have never seen the Trade in Beaver pelts as anything but an accessory to [the commerce] they should conduct."[81]

If the colony's political and commercial affairs were disordered, its finances were a downright shambles. Raudot reported that even in boon times, when New France had received generous royal subsidies and produced between 800,000 and a million pounds' worth of fur each year, the colony had run a deficit; now it subsisted on an annual income of approximately 650,000 pounds, almost half of which came from the king's treasury, and spent nearly twice as much on the war effort and supplies from France.[82] The yearly shortfalls had siphoned off virtually all of the colony's currency to the metropole, where merchants were no longer willing to ship supplies, at great risk and heavy cost, to cash-poor consumers who could pay them

[81] Raudot painted this bleak social portrait of the colony throughout his early missives to Pontchartrain. See, for example, Raudot to Pontchartrain, 18 October 1705, ANOM COL C11A, vol. 22, f. 296 (merchants, officials) and Raudot, "Memoire sur les affaires presentes du Canada, et l'Etablissement du Cap Breton," 7 August 1706, 3-10. The original manuscript from which the Newberry's transcription was made is in ANOM COL C11C, vol. 8, ff. 40-52.

[82] Or so Raudot estimated: the accounts of the fur monopoly alone were so scattered and opaque that sorting them out was "a long-term endeavor and impossible to know precisely." Raudot to Pontchartrain, 20 October 1705, ANOM COL C11G, vol. 3, f. 156v.

only in worthless letters of exchange. Local shipping might have offset the decline in vessels from France, but cutthroat insurance fees, wage and price inflation, and an absence of skilled workers stymied the effort.[83] Under such bleak conditions, Canada's *négociants* were scarcely able to feed themselves and their 20,000 fellow colonists, let alone undertake the sort of large-scale ventures that Raudot believed necessary to revive the colony's flagging fortunes.

It was common for colonial officers to paint such dark portraits of local conditions—punctuated, of course, by confident reassurances—but Raudot's "Memorandum" took the unusual step of exploring the underlying causes, beyond the fur trade fiasco, of Canada's utter poverty and dependence upon France.[84] How could such a vast and fertile colony be so unproductive? he wondered. The soil was good, yet the colonists barely grew enough crops to feed themselves. The forest was endless, yet they could not build and maintain their own fleet of ships. There was ample pasturage and a temperate climate, yet livestock were scarce. The waterways abounded in fish, seals, and whales, yet few were caught and sold. Like sugar and cod—and notably *unlike* beaver pelts—"the consumption of these commodities is infinite," he observed. When their values fell, a merchant could lower their price and still turn a profit, because the sale of one stock did not affect the rest. With such an abundance of infinitely consumable goods, New France should have been not only self-sufficient, but rich, and able to provide the metropole with fish, wood, hemp, and other supplies that French merchants currently bought from other nations. If Raudot

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[83] Raudot, "Memoire sur les affaires presentes du Canada, et l'Etablissement du Cap Breton," 7 August 1706.

[84] On registers of anxiety and reassurance in administrative correspondence, see Thomas Wien, "*Rex in fabula*: travailler l'inquiétude dans la correspondance adressée aux autorités métropolitaines depuis le Canada (1700-1760)," *Outre-mers*, vol. 96, no. 362-363 (1er semestre 2009): 65-85.

could convince the Canadians to see furs as a mere "accessory" to a diverse trade in foodstuffs and natural resources, what would prevent the colony from flourishing?[85]

The answer was ice. Every year, from October to May, the Saint Lawrence River froze over, cutting off access to Québec and trapping all large vessels anchored in its harbor, where the damaging crush of snow and ice incurred serious repair costs on top of the wages and provisions that shippers were obliged to pay crews forced to winter in port. The brief sailing season depressed not only the number of incoming voyages but also the fishing industry, Raudot explained, because ships trawling the Grand Banks could not continue to France without first returning to re-supply at Québec, where, if stuck over winter, they were unable to sell off most of their catch (chronic salt shortages having long made preservation hopeless). Simply put, the location and climate of New France effectively shut down its trade with Europe for two-thirds of the year. To "unblock" its commercial potential, he argued, the colony required a means of supplementing trans-Atlantic voyages with transportation "from near to near." In other words, it needed an entrepôt.[86]

If he had contented himself only with these observations, Raudot would have remained an incisive but otherwise unremarkable thinker. After all, the problems he identified in Canada's economy were hardly new. Since the earliest years of royal rule, intendants had been calling for more robust agriculture, improved shipping, and a diversified trade. There was nothing revolutionary about lamenting the colony's dearth of money or its dismal financial outlook, nor would Pontchartrain have been

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[85] Raudot to Pontchartrain, 20 October 1705, ANOM COL C11G, vol. 3, ff. 156-158v; Raudot, "Memoire sur les affaires presentes du Canada, et l'Etablissement du Cap Breton," 7 August 1706, 1-3.
[86] Raudot, "Memoire sur les affaires presentes du Canada, et l'Etablissement du Cap Breton," 7 August 1706, 18-19.

surprised to learn that the exportation of beaver pelts alone was "insufficient to support an entire Colony."[87] Even the idea of an ice-free entrepôt that would promote trade between New France and the outside world was well established: not only had De Meulles proposed it in 1686, but as early as the late 1660s, Colbert had ordered Intendant Jean Talon to devise plans for a post at Acadia or Cape Breton, "being certain that there is nothing more advantageous than to found Entrepôts, where we could make two voyages per year."[88]

What set Raudot apart from his predecessors is that he sought to resolve Canada's immediate and local problems with systemic, far-reaching solutions that harnessed deep structural forces. He mobilized both abstract principles of exchange and the observed social, demographic, and geographic realities of America to show how France and the colonies could be transformed into a common market greater than the sum of its parts. In making his case to Pontchartrain, he painstakingly reviewed the past and present state of a series of settlements and commodities, both French and foreign, identifying specific areas of inefficiency and opportunity and proposing steps to improve and exploit them. He blended the short-term material needs of Canada, the Antilles, and the metropole with long-term military, diplomatic, and fiscal goals to present a common vision of economic recovery and expansion. That is to say, he absorbed the momentous political and commercial developments of his time to reimagine France's economy in broadly imperial terms.

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[87] Raudot, "Memoire sur les affaires presentes du Canada, et l'Etablissement du Cap Breton," 7 August 1706, 1.

[88] Colbert to Talon, 3 July 1669, and Talon to Colbert, 1673, reproduced in *Rapport de l'archiviste de la Province de Québec, 1930-31* (Québec: Imprimeur du roi, 1931), 114 and 178.

From his opening analysis of Canada's misery and the structural limitations of its trade, Raudot pivoted to a defense of the Cape Breton entrepôt as the "sole means" to revive French power in America. He invited the minister to see the new waystation as a mutual benefit to France and New France. One of its cardinal virtues, he claimed, would be to promote a native shipping industry, based on safe and speedy light-vessel transport, that would improve the circulation of goods between Québec and Cape Breton and hence between New France and Europe. No longer would heavy ships have to risk the 120-league voyage up the ice-choked Gulf of Saint Lawrence. An improved market for Canadian foodstuffs in France, meanwhile, would allow the colonists to enrich themselves instead of merely scraping by. Perhaps mindful of the endless jockeying for privilege among metropolitan merchants, he expected Pontchartrain to see the idea in zero-sum terms: any gains for Canada's settlers and *négociants* must come at the expense of French merchants.[89] But far from benefiting New France at the cost of France, he contended, local profits from fishing and intercolonial shipping would give Canadians the means to buy more French products. Drawn by the prospect of greater purchasing power from the metropole, Canadians would make themselves useful as seasonal laborers in the fisheries, the *coureurs de bois* would abandon the woods to become sailors, and "the colonist, instead of wearing his deerskin clothing as he does now...will wear a French outfit."[90] Attentive to the transformative potential of dress as a marker of status and identity, Raudot suggested that the economic integration made possible by Cape

[89] Raudot, "Memoire sur les affaires presentes du Canada, et l'Etablissement du Cap Breton," 7 August 1706, 11-12.
[90] Raudot, "Memoire sur les affaires presentes du Canada, et l'Etablissement du Cap Breton," 7 August 1706, 10-11, 15-16.

Breton would entail a corresponding cultural effect, as the increased consumption of metropolitan goods civilized the "savagery" of Canada's European population.

According to Raudot, the mutual growth of French and Canadian commerce would open up a wealth of new possibilities in Europe and America. With Canada as a breadbasket, France could sell off its excess grain to other European nations. The corresponding drop in food prices would attract an influx of foreign workers, who could provide cheap labor and an ever-growing consumer base for domestic and colonial goods. In Canada and Cape Breton, a "continuous trade" with the rest of the empire would lower the costs of labor and imports, freeing up the capital necessary for local merchants to partner with each other and their metropolitan counterparts to undertake new ventures such as coal mining, shipbuilding, and rope and tar production that would rescue France from its dependence on foreign suppliers. New Spain and the West Indies, meanwhile, could obtain wood and provisions more cheaply from Cape Breton than anywhere else, which would raise the profit margins of French *armateurs* who controlled Caribbean shipping. And of course the new entrepôt would prise control of the invaluable whaling and cod trades from the Dutch and the British, enormously expanding France's market share in Spain and the Levant. Ultimately, all of these developments would bring foreign money into France and discourage French currency from leaving the kingdom.[91]

But the Cape Breton entrepôt would not only bring great benefits to France and its colonies, Raudot claimed, it would also do "grave harm" to their enemies. Cutting off access to the Newfoundland shoals would deal the British a devastating

[91] Raudot, "Memoire sur les affaires presentes du Canada, et l'Etablissement du Cap Breton," 7 August 1706, 17-18, 20-25.

blow, he claimed, since the coasts of England could scarcely supply more than three shiploads of cod per year. Nor would New Englanders be able to furnish Britain's Caribbean islands with precious Acadian coal. In a delicious inversion of their customary roles, the British American colonies—and by extension the British, Dutch, and Spanish Caribbean colonies who relied upon them for supplies—would become dependent upon clandestine trade with France. "From [Cape Breton], we will provide New England with Wine, Brandy, canvas, ribbons, and taffeta. For the Kingdom this will be an infinite outlet for these goods, because the English carry them to all their Islands on this Continent as well as those of the Dutch...even if the Entry of this merchandise is forbidden, we will find a way to carry their goods to France and they will do the same with ours." Insidiously and by degrees, Britain's vast merchant marine would be co-opted to serve French interests. France "would seize all the money of [Massachusetts]," and by extension "we will seize [the money] of all the peoples of the Americas."[92] Money that did not flow into France with the tide of this state-sanctioned contraband trade could be taken by force, for in wartime the new entrepôt would serve as an ideal base for privateers to prey upon British and Dutch ships, which were obliged by the North Atlantic current to sail along the Grand Banks on their return to Europe. At a time when British naval supremacy was so absolute that France's home fleet had not put out in anger in nearly two years, he foresaw a tantalizing future in which "these Corsairs will enrich His Majesty's subjects and oblige [the British and Dutch] to have large convoys for their flotillas and ships-of-

[92] Raudot, "Memoire sur les affaires presentes du Canada, et l'Etablissement du Cap Breton," 7 August 1706, 20, 25-26.

the-line...which will proportionally diminish their maritime forces in Europe and greatly hamper their Commerce in this part of the world."[93]

Where there was misery, then, Raudot saw markets; where there were enemies, he saw consumers. Having outlined his plan for Cape Breton and sketched its stakes, he closed his memorandum with a grand vision of French commercial supremacy in the maritime Northeast. "This Island, well Settled, would be the basis and foundation of His Majesty in the Americas, within reach of Newfoundland, Acadia, [and] Canada, and not too far from the [Caribbean] Islands to give them all the support they may need," he concluded:

> The Settlement of this Island, which will soon become considerable by the trade that abounds there, will make the English tremble to have a neighbor so well-positioned and Powerful as the King of France. It is by founding a great Post in that Place...that we will be able, in time, to harry the English from Newfoundland and make France the sole master of the cod fisheries in America, which will bring infinite benefits to the Kingdom by the trade with its Neighbors that [France] alone will control.

It was essential to Raudot's vision that a "well Settled" entrepôt be one whose foundations matched the spatial, environmental, and ecological qualities inherent to Cape Breton, for his intricate series of assumptions and outcomes made sense only if colonial trade were channeled by timeless ("infinite") incentives and constraints. For the moment, he left the crown's role in manipulating those forces unclear, aside from a parting insistence that "If we wish to establish this Island in a way that will make

[93] Raudot, "Memoire sur les affaires presentes du Canada, et l'Etablissement du Cap Breton," 7 August 1706, 26-27.

Commerce flourish, we must allow it to trade with all the ports of France, Spain, the Levant, the French Islands of America, and new England."[94]

Designing Cape Breton, Remaking New France (1706-1710)

Raudot's "Memorandum" sparked an extraordinary, years-long debate within the ministry about whether, when, and how to implement his scheme. But when it reached Versailles in the fall of 1706, it received the ordinary treament given to all colonial correspondence: a clerk read through it, summarized its main points, and delivered the *resumé* to Pontchartrain, who recorded his views in terse marginalia ranging from a single word ("good") to several sentences. The minister then took the less common step of soliciting a second opinion, in this case from Riverin. Once he had annotated Riverin's views, he sent the collective wisdom of the ministry back to Raudot, who proffered objections or revised his memorandum accordingly. The same process repeated itself twice over the next four years. By 1710, all sides had thoroughly debated the ways and means necessary to build an entrepôt at Cape Breton. In the process, they grappled with some of the same fundamental questions about commerce and colonization that had been raised by the Council of Trade five years earlier, only this time their answers responded to the specific demands of founding a new settlement and potentially restructuring France's entire overseas commerce.

What is immediately striking about the ministry's response to the "Memorandum" is how much consensus there was between Raudot, Riverin, Pontchartrain, and his clerks. Although they clashed over key matters of cost and

[94] Raudot, "Memoire sur les affaires presentes du Canada, et l'Etablissement du Cap Breton," 7 August 1706, 27-28.

implementation, no one ever questioned the ultimate wisdom or success of the scheme, even though everyone, including Raudot, conceded that the crown was in no state to undertake it anytime soon. Possibly no one dared to criticize the young intendant, who clearly held the minister's favor. Or perhaps Raudot and Riverin, having made a pact to exploit the cod fisheries with the benefit of royal subsidies and Pontchartrain's protection, engaged in a charade of consultation.[95] But more likely all sides genuinely believed in the soundness of Raudot's thinking: there was a core "utility" in his ideas that justified "impossible" levels of royal expense. Their unanimous embrace of his plan in the face of enormous logistical challenges, and despite the different commercial, fiscal, colonial, and metropolitan interests in play, invites us to ask what, exactly, that utility was.

Part of the answer lies in Raudot's way of evaluating colonies as long-term investments in France's future. In his original memorandum, he had insisted that Pontchartrain "must see...Canada as a Colony that no longer has any commerce, and to which Beaver, should it become sellable again, cannot provide the means of subsistence...All the trade that the inhabitant can do and will do in future will give

[95] The surviving evidence suggests that Raudot and Riverin had never discussed Cape Breton before the intendant wrote his memorandum, still less that they were allies, and in any case the notion of a years-long charade of consultation strains belief. While Raudot would later be denounced for just such a conspiracy (in this case to monopolize the fur trade), his accuser, in that case, was Riverin. If Raudot and Riverin ever had an alliance, it did not survive the intendant's time in Canada: he and his father harshly criticized Riverin's conduct as agent of the fur monopoly in Paris, while Riverin's last letters to court bitterly denounced both Pontchartrain (for making Raudot the "absolute master" of Canada's affairs) and Raudot (for governing "according to his passions and interests, without any regard at all for everything that the Colony had made known to him through its Deputy [Riverin]"). Riverin to Conseil de la Marine, 5 May 1716, ANOM COL C11A, vol. 123, ff. 296-297; Unsigned memorandum (likely Riverin) to the Conseil de la Marine, 1716, ANOM COL C11A, vol. 36, ff. 355-358v; Riverin to Comte de Toulouse, 9 April 1716, ANOM COL C11A, vol. 36, ff. 315-316; Riverin to Conseil de la Marine, 31 July 1716, LAC, Nouvelle-France: Correspondence Officielle, C-13998, vol. 6, pp. 163-168; Cameron Nish, "Denis Riverin," in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography Online* (1982).

him only enough to survive on and will not enrich him at all."[96] The intendant denounced Canada's fixation on furs because it provided no room for growth; to Pontchartrain's satisfaction, he proposed a solution that would make the colony's commerce expansible and self-sustaining.[97] In reciprocal commentary that the minister could read side-by-side, Raudot and Riverin echoed each other's belief that the true revival of New France could not be achieved without the new entrepôt, which therefore should be undertaken as a royal project worthy of heavy sacrifices even if the pay-off would not be felt for some years. "This Enterprise is...an affair of state that has no other aim but the public good and the improvement of commerce," Riverin asserted. "Nothing is truer than [the idea that] the Post at Cap Breton is an affair of state," agreed Raudot, "by virtue of the benefits that it will eventually produce for the Kingdom of France, for Canada, for the French Islands...and by the harm it will do to the English Colonies."[98] Their reasoning elevated colonization to an affair of state on the order of diplomacy, justice, and military conquest, all of which likewise called for vast and continuous expenditures in the name of glory, salvation, and public order. Indeed, the new entrepôt aimed to accomplish the same goals: commerce was simply warfare by other means, after all, and a flourishing

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[96] Raudot, "Memoire sur les affaires presentes du Canada, et l'Etablissement du Cap Breton," 7 August 1706, 11-12.

[97] The minister heartily approved both Raudot's diagnosis of Canada's economic woes ("good, absolutely) and his prescription of a new entrepôt at Cape Breton to relieve them ("Arrange it, discuss it...press it, but improve the savings"). "Résumé d'une lettre de Raudot fils," 14 October 1706, C11A, vol. 24, ff. 138v ("absolutely"); Riverin, "Mémoire sur ce qui regarde l'île du Cap-Breton," 4 December 1706, ANOM COL C11A, vol. 24, ff. 148v ("press it"). Both documents are annotated by Pontchartrain.

[98] Riverin and Raudot, "Moyens" and "Réponses," 4 December 1706 and 16 July 1708, NL Ayer mss. 293, vol. 1, pp. 28-29. Riverin's comments on the 1706 memorandum, rendered into a list of "Moyens" by a clerk, were sent to Raudot in June 1707, after which he recorded his "Responses." For Riverin's original comments, with Pontchartrain's marginalia, see Riverin, "Mémoire sur ce qui regarde l'île du Cap-Breton," 4 December 1706, ANOM COL C11A, vol. 24, ff. 145-149.

overseas trade would eventually bring power, plenty, and peace to all of the king's dominions.

This way of looking beyond past failures and present obstacles to see the tremendous untapped value in colonies both justified and obliged royal intervention. If the settlement of Cape Breton were viewed as a down payment on the public good, then no one but the king should carry it out. From this perspective, the cheaper, safer, and less onerous alternative of farming out the scheme to a private company was inconceivable, since bitter experience had amply demonstrated that trading monopolies, by their very "spirit," promoted neither the public interest nor commercial growth. Riverin and Raudot explained their logic in nearly identical terms that repeatedly hammered the point home:

Means (Riverin), 4 December 1706, Paris	Responses (Raudot), 16 July 1708, Québec
This Enterprise being properly an affair of State that has no other aim but the public good and the improvement of commerce, It is not suitable to give its Management over to any Company whatsoever. The Spirit of Companies is to make a lot of money in a short amount of time, to abandon affairs that do not earn great profits quickly enough, and to be opposed to the liberty of the inhabitants.	Nothing is truer than [the idea that] the Settlement at Cap Breton is an affair of state, by virtue of the benefits that it will eventually produce for the Kingdom of France, for Canada, for the French Islands...and by the harm it will do to the english Colonies...It is not suitable to give its management over to any Company, [for companies], being obliged to make great expenses in order to exploit these new posts, seek only the means to recoup their costs and earn great profits without taking any trouble at all to Build [the posts] solidly. The excessive profit they wish to make is entirely opposed to a new Settlement where one must work to convince the inhabitants to come settle.
Here we are not talking about short-term gains, but about building and laying the foundations for a Settlement that can produce, in the course of time, ever more favorable fruits for everyone. Only His Majesty can take it in hand, once it has pleased God to bring Peace to Europe.	Only His Majesty can take this Settlement in hand and, by giving it a form of government that will be lucrative to Him, find the means to compensate the outlay that he will expend upon it through the revenues that it will bring to Him. These are not revenues that will come in a day, since [colonial] Settlements produce nothing when we are building them but rather always cost some upkeep...yet eventually, once they are well established, they produce ever-growing revenues.[99]

By now such language was utterly familiar. The same rhetoric about private companies as a nuisance to the public good had surfaced repeatedly in merchant pleas to the Council of Trade, not to mention Riverin's own memorandum on the fur monopoly; similarly, Raudot and Riverin couched their opposition to companies in a pragmatic assessment of colonial needs rather than a principled aversion to privilege

[99] Riverin and Raudot, "Moyens" and "Réponses," 4 December 1706 and 16 July 1708, NL Ayer mss. 293, vol. 1, pp. 28-30.

per se.[100] Yet even as they echoed the merchant deputies' claims, they broke with them in a fundamental way: instead of mobilizing anti-company arguments to promote "liberty" as the true agent of commercial progress, they used them to make a case for the state as the only force capable of undertaking an enterprise as expensive and far-reaching as overseas colonization.

This state-centered logic gave renewed strength and purpose to an old line of thought. In 1663, when Louis XIV had revoked the charter of the Compagnie des Cent Associés and declared New France a royal colony, he had done so, he claimed, to rescue the trade of Canada and the kingdom, "the establishment of Commerce being the source and principle of the abundance that we strive by all means to provide for our people, and the principal and greatest portion of this commerce consisting in overseas colonies." In one sense, Raudot and Riverin were simply asking Louis to honor that commitment. But in another sense they wanted him to break his word. In the same declaration, the king had announced that "before establishing any new [colonies], we have deemed it necessary to think of maintaining, protecting, and augmenting that which is already established, which is what has led us to inquire especially about the condition of New France."[101] In urging Louis to invest unprecedented sums of his own money in a new colony at Cape Breton, Raudot and Riverin invited him to see more colonization, and even greater royal initiative, as the true means to bring abundance to both New France and the rest of his empire.

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[100] Despite his criticisms of the fur monopoly, Riverin jealously defended his privilege as the director of an exclusive fishing company, while Raudot would later oversee and invest in two of the kingdom's largest farms. Louis XIV to Denonville and Champigny, 1 May 1689, AN Marine B, vol. 15, f. 60v; "Mémoire du sieur Riverin à Monseigneur de Pontchartrain sur les pêches sédentaires du Canada," 28 January 1696, ANOM COL C11D, vol. 3, ff. 3-8v; Nish, "Riverin."

[101] Déclaration du Roi, March 1663, ANOM COL C11A, vol. 2, f. 5v.

It is worth pausing to ask why Raudot and Riverin were so insistent that Cape Breton should be colonized by the crown rather than a private company. After all, the king was no less interested in certain and immediate revenues than merchant-bankers were, and he already farmed out most of his affairs to privileged monopolies or venal officeholders who treated their public functions like personal assets. The proprietary venture had long been a common and useful model for new government enterprises, and would remain so through the fall of the Old Regime. With apologies to Vauban, there was no groundswell of support for the king to actually *replace* tax farms and trading monopolies, only to reform their abuses and punish the evildoers responsible. If private companies were good in theory, and often met the crown's needs in practice, why were they ill suited to overseas colonization? And why should anyone, including Raudot, think that the king would succeed where so many companies had failed?

It was not simply that private companies were by their very "spirit" self-interested, impatient, and oppressive, but also that Raudot believed in the power of the state to manipulate the forces of man and nature in a way that no individual or company could do. According to his revised "Memorandum to Lay the First Foundations of the Settlement Proposed for the Island of Cape Breton," written in 1708, no colonial venture could succeed without the proper incentives, constraints, and attitudes in place. He argued that Louis alone could bring about the "Species of attractions" necessary for a new colony "to grow and fashion itself" in a way that would encourage the right sort of settlement and trade. Under company rule, by contrast, the worst aspects of the French character held sway:

> The French have never been regarded as a people suited to [colonial] Settlements. They wish to sow and reap at the same time, which is impossible. In addition, they wish to take [only] the gist of everything and enrich themselves quickly. This is the conduct and the Mindset of the majority of them. There are even those who are so wretched that they do not scruple to sacrifice an entire country so long as they can make themselves wealthy. These sorts of people are a plague upon new settlements and we must not suffer them. Instead we must have people who sow in order to reap and who, in re-sowing each year, await the harvest time and do not rush it.[102]

Companies imprinted such attitudes ever more deeply upon the minds of the colonists; the king made it his business to root them out. His unparalleled resources, unquestionable motives, unassailable authority, and unclouded perception of the public good, if properly expressed in the colony's constitution, could make the inhabitants apply themselves to the kinds of commercial activities best suited to their surroundings and to the needs of the empire. In other words, by investing heavily in Cape Breton and moulding its government according to a clear-eyed estimation of its potential—the sort of estimation Raudot claimed to offer—Louis would create the conditions necessary for everlasting growth.

Raudot was particularly mindful and meticulous about the constitution of Cape Breton because he was already engaged in a root-and-branch reform of New France. In the wake of his 1706 memorandum, he had received orders not only to research and revise his proposal, but also to prepare Canada for its future role in the scheme. "I believe, as you do, that we cannot work on [Cape Breton] until the peace," Pontchartrain instructed, "[but] it is still good to take measures [now] so that

[102] Raudot, "Memoire pour jetter les premiers fondements de l'Etablissement proposé dans l'Isle du Cap Breton," 20 August 1708, Newberry Library, Ayer ms. 293, vol. 1, pp. 74-75. The original document is in ANOM COL C11G, vol. 6, ff. 39v-58v.

we are able to begin as soon as we can....Continue to examine carefully everything that can be done to place the colony of Canada on a better footing than it is, by rendering it richer, more useful to the State, and less expensive to His Majesty."[103] Alone or in tandem with his father, Raudot issued a battery of ordinances aimed at removing impediments and enhancing incentives to trade. He intervened to resolve commercial disputes before they went to court, set regulations for butchers and tanners, imposed new terms on land use and seigneurial contracts, established twice-weekly markets at Québec and Montréal, cleared "filth" from the streets, razed old structures, built new thoroughfares, developed urban lots, and policed the dimensions of roads, the salting of meat, the export of flour, the price of wheat, the sale of liquor, the keeping of pigs and horses, and the exchange of brandy and beaver pelts with Natives. Perhaps inspired by his experience at Dunkirk, he encouraged local merchants to found an exchange, or *bourse*, which he hoped would "reconcile the minds of all these traders and make them undertake new enterprises," and to set an example he invested his own money in a joint privateering venture against the English. To encourage farmers to clear forest for planting, he proposed a system of royal grants that would be funded by the reintroduction of fur-trading permits—co-opting fur fever to advance agriculture. In the absence of adequate credit and currency, he enforced circulation of the colony's makeshift card money. His efforts to stimulate commerce extended to a vigorous defense of private property, which ranged from forbidding the colonists to collect nuts, raisins, and tree cuttings from their neighbors' lands to upholding slavery. He drew inspiration from the plantation

[103] Pontchartrain to Raudot, 6 June 1708, ANOM COL C11G, vol. 2: ff. 190-191; Pontchartrain to Raudot, 30 June 1707, C11G, vol. 2, ff. 113-114v.

economy of the Antilles: having received complaints that African and Indian captives were fleeing the colony en masse "out of a notion of liberty inspired in them by those who have not purchased them...[and] under the pretext that there are no Slaves in France," he declared that all were legally enslaved and "belong as plain property to those who have bought them," because, he argued, "all of the Colonies should be perceived on the same footing" and Indian slaves "are as necessary to the inhabitants of this Country for the Cultivation of lands and other tasks...as the negroes are to the islands."[104] Administered over the course of just four years, Raudot's numerous remedies sought to alleviate what he viewed as decades of bad habits and countevailing impulses that had wormed their way into the colony's core relationships and institutions. To make labor cheaper and more accessible, production more stable and diverse, and trade more frequent and frictionless, he engaged in an aggressive overhaul of Canadian society that combined heavy-handed paternalism with a mercantile outlook.

Raudot's immersion in a simultaneous project to remake New France helps to explain why his prescriptions for Cape Breton drew first and foremost upon the cumulative experience of the colonies, not the metropole, and why he believed that the new settlement should be built and governed by the state rather than a private company.[105] The lessons he took from Canada fundamentally shaped the "First

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[104] For a comprehensive list of the ordinances passed by Raudot and his father, see Pierre-Georges Roy, ed., *Inventaire des Ordonnances des Intendants de la Nouvelle-France* (Québec: L'Eclaireur, 1919), vol. I: 1-114. On Raudot's defense of slavery, see his ordinance of 13 April 1709, ANOM COL C11A, vol. 30: ff. 334-335 and Brett Rushforth, *Bonds of Alliance: Indigenous and Atlantic Slaveries in New France* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2012), 136-139. On the merchants' assembly, see Raudot to Pontchartrain, 15 November 1708, ANOM COL C11G, vol. 3, f. 193v. For his other efforts to improve commercial life in the colony, see Horton, "Antoine-Denis Raudot."

[105] One notable exception to this pattern was his emphasis on privateering, which probably drew upon his experience at Dunkirk (indeed, Louisbourg would come to be known as the Dunkirk of North

Foundations" he proposed for the island. The crown should appoint a naval *commissaire* responsible to the intendant of New France, he recommended, and a governor who understood and believed in the purpose of the colony, as well as magistrates, priests, nuns, physicians, bakers, engineers, carpenters, and Native translators—all of whose cost to the state he neatly tallied in the margins. The intendant was equally adamant that there should be no lawyers (who always perverted justice), no urban fiefs (which had hindered development in Québec), no exclusive rights to fishing or trade (which invariably drove away settlers), and, in the first years of settlement, no duties on cod (which were known to deter metropolitan merchants). To keep the affairs of the waystation humming, he proposed that several of his Canadian ordinances be applied there, as well.[106]

If sound institutions and appropriate personnel were crucial, naturally, so were the people. Raudot believed that the colonists, like cattle, must have good traits not only inculcated by their environment but also bred into them across generations. Hence the settlers should consist primarily of transplanted Canadians and Acadians, "who are accustomed to the country" and "are made to clear land, chop wood, saw logs, walk in snowshoes, sail, [and] hunt." Joined by French soldiers, he reasoned, these Americans "will form a hard-working, industrious, and indefatigable people capable of undertaking everything."[107] To preserve those virtues, he insisted that the crown should send only young foundling girls as marriage partners for the soldiers, since they would more readily adopt local ways than the all-too-common women

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America). Another was his insistence on the importance of establishing *bourses* in New France and Cape Breton, which likewise may have been inspired by what he observed of the Chamber of Commerce at Dunkirk.

[106] Raudot, "Fondements," 20 August 1708, pp. 76-98.

[107] Riverin and Raudot, "Moyens" and "Réponses," 4 December 1706 and 16 July 1708, pp. 40-42.

"raised in disorder" who "always work evil, and...being all very lazy and haughty, inspire arrogance and sloth in their Children as they have done in Canada."[108] Raudot made the equivalence between people and livestock quite explicit: even the colony's oxen, pigs, poultry, and sheep must be locally sourced, such that "one could say that Canada and Acadia alone will give shape to this Settlement."[109] In this most comprehensive and programmatic version of his memorandum, he made the past successes and failures of French colonization in North America the touchstone reference for Cape Breton's development.

Raudot's plans for implementation encountered little opposition from the ministry, but the calculative sensibility underpinning them drew scorn and consternation; the interplay of short-term cost and long-term value, public interest and private capital became a major sticking point with Pontchartrain. For one thing, all sides haggled over the outlay. Whereas Riverin believed that Cape Breton could be self-sufficient within three years, enough to reimburse a royal advance of some 350,000 pounds and even "to grow...to the point of attaining great rank in the world," Raudot felt that such a timeline would be "difficult not to say impossible" to meet, and argued for a much heftier budget: 300,000 pounds in the first year, plus 150,000 in each of the two years after that. To make money, he argued, the king would have to spend—a lot.[110] One clerk sarcastically observed of the intendant's projections, "All of this means, in good French, that this settlement is impossible right now. After

[108] Raudot, "Fondements," 20 August 1708, p. 101.
[109] Riverin and Raudot, "Moyens" and "Réponses," 4 December 1706 and 16 July 1708, p. 42.
[110] Riverin and Raudot, "Moyens" and "Réponses," 4 December 1706 and 16 July 1708, NL Ayer mss. 293, vol. 1, pp. 30, 43-44.

the peace we can examine if there are less onerous ways to achieve it."[111] Pontchartrain disagreed about putting off the plans, but he was furious with Raudot for quoting such inflated figures. "I have reason to believe...that you are not persuaded yourself of all that you say about the utility of [the project], because you render its execution impossible by the immense expenditures you propose to make," he fumed. "Could you have thought, especially given all that I have written to you about the state of affairs [here], that His Majesty could take on an added expense of 100,000 crowns per year, or that we could ever engage individuals to invest in it?"[112]

More than a simple dispute over numbers, Pontchartrain's rebuke signalled that he did not yet accept the developmental calculus that guided Raudot's thinking. And why should he? The minister faced his own dense and pressing thicket of financial problems, not to mention the delicate task of justifying any considerable new expenditure to the king, and in the midst of warfare and famine he was at pains to perceive the colonization of Cape Breton—a distant rock scarcely visible at the margins of even his best maps—as a long-term investment that absolutely must be underwritten by massive royal subsidies. When he read the summary of Raudot's memorandum and responses to Riverin, Pontchartrain noted, next to a passage explaining the necessity of state backing, that "a Company could supplement this." He went on to reject entirely Raudot's claim that a trading company was unfit to carry out the project. "All the rest proves that [Raudot] is wrong, and that a Company is the sole means to succeed and to build a settlement as essential as this one," he concluded. "We must seriously consider it, first of all because confidence will be

[111] "Résumé d'une lettre de Raudot, fils, sur l'établissement de Cap-Breton," 1708, ANOM COL C11A, vol. 29, f. 384v.
[112] Pontchartrain to Raudot, 6 July 1709, ANOM COL C11G, vol. 4, f. 183.

infinite. This is much more solid, more capital, more useful, and Essential for the State as well as for the Colonies, at least in my opinion."[113] Having thus echoed the arguments made by pro-company deputies to the Council of Trade several years before, the minister resolved in a follow-up letter that "it would be useless to pretend to make this settlement other than by way of a Company." He ordered the intendant to draw up a new memorandum that the ministry could sell as a joint crown-company venture, one in which investors could have "some certainty [of profit], or at least the appearance of it," and where, "in reducing expenses, we can do without those which might frighten away [investors] in the first years, and [instead] make them perceive the utility that will come to them from the Commerce of this colony."[114]

Raudot's subsequent "Memorandum on the Settlement of Cape Breton" was the shortest version of his proposal but in some ways the most interesting. He responded to Pontchartrain's order with the lukewarm enthusiasm of an aggrieved subordinate: "Permit me to represent to you, my lord, that affairs will change face," he pleaded, "[but] if His Majesty does not want to take charge of [Cape Breton], a company will do it well."[115] Nonetheless, he delivered precisely the sort of confident, sweeping, and economical sales pitch the minister had demanded. The tone of his previous writings had been optimistic about what his scheme would accomplish for the king, but also fully attentive to the heavy expenses and numerous logistical challenges involved. Now, he was relentlessly bullish about the gains to be made and virtually silent about the costs. No longer concerned with the settlement's

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[113] "Résumé d'une lettre de Raudot, fils, concernant l'établissement de Cap-Breton," with annotations by Pontchartrain, 1709, ANOM COL C11C, vol. 8, f. 53v. This is an annotated version of the résumé written the previous year (cited above).
[114] Pontchartrain to Raudot, 6 July 1709, ff. 183v-184.
[115] Raudot to Pontchartrain, 1 November 1709, ANOM COL C11G, vol. 4, f. 186.

constitution beyond a few lines devoted to personnel and fortifications (all of which would pay for themselves, he promised, thanks to the company's exclusive right to supply them), his memorandum concentrated on the certainty of profit and where metropolitan backers would find it. He described more starkly and succinctly than ever before the circular, integrated trade made inevitable by the new entrepôt. North Atlantic cod, herring, sole, fish oil, sealskin, porpoise teeth, iron, masts, rope, plaster, planks, and boards would go to France and Spain; flour, peas, seal oil, fish, butter, wood, salted meats, and iron would make their way to the Antilles, Cuba, and Mexico; French wines, brandy, clothing, and luxuries would find eager markets in Canada, Cape Breton, and New England. Knowing how enviously French merchants regarded the prosperity of their British and Spanish competitors, he pledged that unfettered access to the cod fisheries would reward investors with riches "greater than the mines of Peru or Mexico," and that French North America "could do the same as new England and new York do with Jamaica and the other English islands." Whether legal or clandestine, the company's commerce with the various French, Spanish, and British colonies "will supply...infinitely-consumable Goods with a guaranteed outlet." French ships would never lack cargo to sell, moreover, for Cape Breton's iron ore would always provide a high-demand merchandise of last resort. If his readers still had any doubts about the security of their investment, Raudot reminded them that local rents and privateering would offer stable sources of income, and that shippers would always find in the entrepôt a reliable source of water, rations, and safe harbor.

The message was clear: "The more one carries on Trade with this Island, the more profit he will make."[116]

Essentially, Raudot reworked his memorandum's style and content to appeal to an audience of merchants and bankers rather than the minister, and in the process he abandoned the state-centered logic that had previously framed his vision. In the absence of considerable royal advances, there was no need to appreciate what the crown could accomplish, nor to examine the various social, demographic, and economic forces that the king alone had the power to manipulate. The question of how the colony would be composed and policed not only faded into the background, but disappeared almost entirely. Naturally, there were no meditations on the iniquities of private trading companies or the profound shortcomings of French settlers, but there was no talk of the sort of men needed in positions of power to ensure the long-term success of the settlement, either, nor any discussion of salaries, laws, ordinances, or the "public good." The "utility" Raudot put on display was certain, immediate, and easy profit to private investors, not imperial *grandeur*, the revival of Canada, or the expensive and patient extraction of maximum value from the colonies as a whole. Rhetorically, Pontchartrain's order required Raudot to write persuasively for moneyed interests, to think and to argue in the terms he believed were most compelling to them. The result was a very different text, even if the broader commercial and strategic contours of his scheme remained largely the same.

We do not know how metropolitan investors responded to Raudot's final memorandum, or even if any read it, because in the end Pontchartrain changed his

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[116] Raudot, "Memoire sur l'Etablissement du Cap Breton," 27 Feb 1710, ANOM COL C11G, vol. 6, ff. 72-79v.

mind. Why he reverted to a state-led effort is not entirely clear, but on the same day that he notified Raudot of his promotion back to France in May 1710, he also requested a report on the history of European claims to Cape Breton and ordered Raudot's father and Governor Vaudreuil to occupy the island quietly before the English could beat them to it.[117] It is possible that the minister simply could not find any willing backers at a time when money was scarce (a problem to which Raudot alluded in his letter pleading that "affairs will change face"). The surviving evidence suggests, however, that wartime contingencies played a decisive role: the British conquered Port Royal just a few months later, and by 1712 it was clear that France would have to cede all of Acadia and Plaisance by the terms of the next peace. From that point forward Pontchartrain consistently described the maintenance of a foothold near the cod fisheries as an affair of the utmost urgency to the crown.[118] His resolve may well have been strengthened by the presence of Raudot, who continued to act as midwife of the project from within the ministry, but in all likelihood the intendant's greatest contribution was to offer a compelling royal alternative to a private option that events had made impractical, undesirable, or both.

Conclusion: Seeing the Value in Colonies

Even before the peace was signed at Utrecht in 1713, a thoroughly depleted and debt-ridden France launched a rapid colonization of Cape Breton. In 1712,

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[117] Pontchartrain to Raudot, 10 May 1710, ANOM COL B, vol. 32, f. 30; Pontchartrain to Jacques Raudot, 10 May 1710, ANOM COL C11G, vol. 5, ff. 43-44.

[118] See, for example, Pontchartrain to Vaudreuil and Bégon, 1712, ANOM COL B, vol. 34, f. 68; Pontchartrain to Bégon, 29 March 1713, ANOM COL B, vol. 35, f. 30; Pontchartrain to l'abbé Gaulin, 29 March 1713, ANOM COL B, vol. 35, f. 32. Charlevoix attested that "if this Memorandum does not persuade those who read this History on the question of preferring Isle Royale over Acadia, it will at least make them understand that after the cession of this Province & the Port of Plaisance to the Crown of England, a solid Settlement on this island was of an indispensable necessity." Charlevoix, *Histoire*, 388-389.

Pontchartrain solicited opinions on the best site for a settlement, and several months later a royal expedition produced extensive soundings, surveys, and maps of the island.[119] The maps reflected the ministry's new ambitions for Cape Breton as well as their pedigree: Jacques L'Hermitte, the king's engineer, drew the first detailed views of its coastline, including today's Scatarie Island, which he dubbed "Isle Raudot" (Figure 5). A widespread consensus quickly emerged that Louis should hasten to protect and promote a place that now represented the future of French power in the maritime Northeast. One memorandum to the king's council stated plainly that the crown must build up the outpost "since it is necessary that France have a permanent settlement in the cod fisheries."[120] An unsigned missive to Pontchartrain warned him not to give away Acadia and Cape Breton, which, like "the two eyes" of New France, were so "absolutely necessary" to it that "we must never separate them or cede them to foreigners," who would eagerly usurp the "20 million pounds annually" that these three colonies together could provide.[121] Another brief simply took it for granted that the king would invest heavily to keep and fortify the island.[122] In late 1713, the ministry indeed established a royal garrison and government at Cape Breton, and began to people it with subjects repatriated from Acadia and Plaisance.

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[119] Bégon and Vaudreuil, "Mémoire sur les établissements à faire en l'île du Cap Breton et à la côte du Labrador," 12 November 1712, ANOM COL C11G, vol. 3, unpaginated but joined to Vaudreuil's letter of the same date; "Mémoire de M. Raudot, fils, sur Louisbourg, port Dauphin, port Toulouse," 1714, Library and Archives Canada, microfilm reel C-13998, vol. 5, pp. 1251-1254.

[120] "Projet par estimation de la dépense à faire pour l'évacuation de Plaisance et l'établissement de l'île du Cap Breton," 1712, ANOM COL C11B, vol. 1, ff. 3-4.

[121] "Détail succinct de ce qui compose les vingt millions (ou environ) que raporte la Colonie du Canada par an au Roy, et à ses sujets," ANOM COL C11A, vol. 21, ff. 271-272.

[122] Villieu, "Mémoire sur l'établissement de l'île du Cap-Breton," 24 January 1713, ANOM COL C11B, vol. 1, ff. 17-18v.

In the following decades, Île Royale and its capital, Louisbourg, would realize much of Raudot's vision (Figure 6). By the 1720s, the island served as a bustling entrepôt between France, Canada, and the Antilles. Small boats carried wood, flour, meat, grain, and peas from Québec to Louisbourg, which consumed some and re-exported the rest to Martinique in exchange for sugar, rum, and other tropical merchandise. The same light vessels brought French and Caribbean goods back to a revived (if not rich) New France. Meanwhile, the waystation engaged in a healthy clandestine trade with the English colonies, especially Massachusetts, which exchanged livestock and grains for iron ore and French finished products—all with the tacit consent of royal officials, who believed it opened up new markets to France and prevented a more serious contraband trade from flourishing. Île Royale never directly profited from its role as an entrepôt, since almost all of its shipping was controlled by French and Canadian merchants, but thanks to the great international demand for its fish, the colony managed to run a surplus balance of payments every year through the end of the 1730s.[123]

The "Memorandum" that projected so much of this success conformed to a well-established genre of administrative writing conditioned by mercantile habits and concerns, but it also pioneered a new way of seeing profound strategic and commercial value to the state in seemingly under-exploited spaces. By undertaking colonization directly, Raudot believed, the crown could recoup the considerable time and resources France had already spent on American settlements and guide their future development in ways that would maximize profits, maintain public order, and

[123] Cécile Vidal and Gilles Havard, *Histoire de l'Amérique française* (Paris: Flammarion, 2008 ed.), 462-463, 467-471.

master the territories most essential to French aims. To his mind, the high stakes involved not only justified but demanded great public expense, because only the king could reliably perceive and accomplish what was best for his empire as a whole. This did not amount to forcing a particular kind of commerce onto his subjects. Rather, it meant cultivating the human relationships and institutions necessary to harvest the benefits God and nature had provided for them.

Raudot's continued oversight of North American affairs following his return to France gave him ample opportunity to put his ideas into practice. In 1716, under orders from the newly formed Conseil de la Marine, he sent the governor and intendant of Canada instructions for how to better harness the resources of New France and channel them through the new waystation. "Of all the French colonies," he began, "Canada is the best provided with people capable of work and yet the least useful to the State, by the few goods it produces from this vast country; and at the same time it is the one most costly to the King, by the great expenditures His Majesty is obliged to make for its survival and defense." Such a state of affairs was untenable but hardly hopeless. Raudot insisted that New France "could become very valuable" if the colonists would at last devote themselves to planting crops, raising livestock, and engaging in a "useful commerce" of wood and foodstuffs for metropolitan goods, which the king had facilitated for them "by building up Île Royale powerfully to serve as their entrepôt." To "excite and invite" them to follow through, he and the Conseil proposed to teach them "the means to enrich and make use of themselves in future" in a way that would be "equally useful to the inhabitants of Canada and the Kingdom's Merchants." The governor and intendant were to assemble the colony's political and

commercial elites and read out to them an attached memorandum, which explained which of their country's products French *negociants* were keen to have, in what quantities and at what prices they were willing to buy them, and which finished goods they were prepared to sell in return. The document also advised the colonists to confine all new plantations to the banks of the Saint Lawrence opposite Québec, so as to build one continuous chain of settlement closer and closer to Île Royale. On behalf of a state poised and motivated to see what was in their best interest, Raudot stressed that the Canadians "should regard all that the Conseil proposes to them as a Certain profit...[and] if they furnish annually the amounts of each item contained in the attached memorandum, they will earn 400,000 to 500,000 pounds each year, and...the traffic between France and Canada will be able to occupy forty to fifty ships instead of three or four."[124]

Although Raudot developed his ideas in response to the particular needs of New France and Cape Breton, they were quickly embraced by contemporaries who applied them to other colonies. In 1717, when the settlement of Louisiana threatened to collapse under the weight of accumulated debt and years of mismanagement, its proprietor, Antoine Crozat, solicited a royal bailout and takeover of his company's affairs, declaring that the crown should intervene to rescue an enterprise that could not be achieved "without much time and patience and...immense expenditure." Indeed, he argued, Louisiana's tremendous potential as a counterweight to Britain's

[124] Raudot, "Instruction pour le gouverneur et intendant du Canada," 1716, ANOM COL C11A, vol. 36, ff. 47-50v; Raudot, "Instruction dressée par Raudot fils pour le gouverneur et l'intendant du Canada, concernant le commerce," 1716, LAC, Microfilm reel C-13998, vol. 6, pp. 69-74. The second of these two versions of the same text, which contains some different phrasing and structure, is the more polished, and lacks the annotations of the first, suggesting that it was the one eventually sent to New France.

New World colonies and an alternative source of American tobacco made it imperative.[125] Father François Le Maire, a friend and correspondent of Raudot stationed at Mobile, pleaded with the Conseil to assume control of the colony because "the preservation of Canada, which has cost France so much, depends on the settlement of Louisiana." Anxious that members of the Conseil might prefer to unload the burden onto another company, he echoed, in strikingly similar terms, Raudot's argument that revenues would one day reward the king's sacrifices: "One must sow before he can reap, and the hope of a harvest must make him risk something."[126] Such pleas emerged from different motives—Crozat sought to extract some return from his sunken investment, while Le Maire wished to continue God's work in his "barbarous" surroundings—but they shared an insistence that colonizing North America had become a business too big and important to fail.

One of the most striking and unexpected legacies of Raudot's "Memorandum" is that it reinforced ways of thinking about colonization and economic privilege that later arose independently across Europe and North America. When Charlevoix printed it in 1744, he not only celebrated "a project so fine, so well designed, &...equally advantageous to Old & New France," but also its sharp criticism of colonial trading companies. What had made his friend so critical of proprietary ventures, the priest explained approvingly, "was the experience of those which up to then had held the Domaine, or exclusive Commerce, of New France & the West Indies."[127] By the mid-eighteenth century, that bitter body of experience had only

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[125] Various memoranda of Antoine Crozat to the Conseil de la Marine, 1717, quoted in Giraud, *History of French Louisiana*, vol. 1: 66, 68.
[126] François Le Maire, "Mémoire de la Louisiane," BnF Manuscrits français 12105, f. 13.
[127] Charlevoix, *Histoire*, t. XX: 395-397.

grown: the disastrous crash of the South Sea and Mississippi Bubbles, the royal takeover of Louisiana, the spread of liberal theories of economic growth, and simmering resentment toward repressive institutions like the Compagnie des Indes combined to make commercial privilege anathema to many learned and ordinary subjects alike.[128] That feeling would continue to hold wide sway in the next century, when political figures ranging from the Québécois liberal François-Xavier Garneau to the French reactionary Claude-Marie Raudot draped the intendant's indictment in the unlikely mantle of their own (mutually opposed) economic visions.[129]

Alongside its enduring appeal to critics of commercial privilege, the "Memorandum" buttressed attempts by eighteenth-century officials in Great Britain and America to make Cape Breton the focal point of an imperial strategy bent on sole possession of the Northeast American seaboard. To be sure, the British arrived at the strategy on their own, having become increasingly exasperated after 1713 to find a weakened rival still harassing their settlements, siphoning their trade, and blocking their access to the precious Newfoundland cod that William Pitt the Elder would later call "British gold"—all thanks to the wicked build-up of a "spot of earth" that

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[128] The political economist François de Forbonnais's entry on "Compagnies de Commerce" in the *Encyclopédie*, for instance, located the origins of exclusive trade in "barbarism & ignorance," and, while conceding that in some cases the state should encourage new enterprises by granting restricted commercial rights, concluded that they were "useful" and "worthwhile" only in dealings with "barbarous" and un-Christian nations—a category from which Europe's New World colonies were explicitly exempt. François de Forbonnais, "Compagnie de Commerce," in *L'Encyclopédie* (1753), vol. 3: 739-743. URL: http://artflsrv02.uchicago.edu/cgi-bin/philologic/getobject.pl?c.2:1661:7.encyclopedie0416.7640085 (accessed 18 June 2016).

[129] Garneau, *Histoire du Canada*, t. II: 66-68; Claude-Marie Raudot, "Deux intendants." On Claude-Marie Raudot's conservative economic thought, see Raudot, *De la décadence de la France* (Paris: Amyot, 1850); Koenraad Swart, *The Sense of Decadence in Nineteenth-Century France* (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1964), 89-90.

Providence had manifestly intended to be theirs.[130] But they found in Raudot's plan flagrant and undeniable proof that France had dealt in bad faith, as well as a detailed account of the tremendous value its government placed upon an outpost located within easy striking distance of their own colonies. Both seemed like compelling reasons to seize and maintain control of the island. When imperial agents such as Massachusetts Attorney-General William Bollan and the royal geographer Thomas Jefferys sought to convince the British public of Cape Breton's "Advantage and Importance," they happily discovered that Raudot had already made the case for them decades before.[131]

But why translate and reprint the "Memorandum" itself, at length, annotated, virtually verbatim? True, it might have been quicker and easier than drawing up a case from scratch, but the pamphlets by Bollan, Jefferys, and other writers contained many more words of their own. The temptation to broadcast the confidential papers of "French ministers" for all to see must have been irresistible, of course, not to mention rhetorically shrewd. Yet I would suggest that reprinting the memorandum was appealing for another reason: British officials had come to share the same calculative approach to empire that underpinned Raudot's thinking. His logic made sense to them because, in ways that conformed to an administrative "script" all their own, they had begun to make similar arguments about the stakes of colonization and

[130] Pitt quoted in Rajani Sudan, *The Alchemy of Empire: Abject Materials and the Technologies of Colonialism* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2016), 124. On British designs for Cape Breton after 1713, see S. Max Edelson, *New Map of Empire*, ch. 3. My thanks to Dr. Edelson for permitting me to read and cite his draft chapter.

[131] Bollan, "Importance and Advantage"; Jefferys, "Importance of Cape Breton."

the role of the state in promoting it.[132] "The above Memorial has pointed out to us so many of the Advantages which [Britain] may reap from this Important Conquest, that it has in great measure cut short our work in enumerating them," Bollan observed in 1746, "[Cape Breton] is, in all Respects, so situated, as if Providence intended it should make a part of the *British Dominions*, as it really and in Fact is the Key to all the rest. If this be the case...can any Care be employed, any Money expended, that is too considerable for the Preservation of it?"[133] He went on to elevate Raudot's project into a blueprint for "Our King, Our Ministers, Our Legislators and Our People":

> From the Arguments and Reasons given by [him]...it is very evident that nothing could turn to greater Account...we are therefore furnished with a Hint, how to render this island not only immediately useful, but also how to people, fortify, and enrich it in a short time...For where a *Staple* or *Mart* is established, thither, of Course, will resort great Numbers of Merchants, and Traders. These bring Money, and Money produces Industry: By Money, Industry, Numbers of People, and Encouragement, what is too difficult to be effected? The most barren and desart [sic] Spot of Ground in the Universe, would in these Circumstances, be rendered fertile...Every Difficulty would be turned into some sort of Advantage; and what is now a Horrour, would be converted into a Beauty.[134]

By placing Raudot's "Memorandum" at the beginning of a tradition of seeing colonies as interconnected and richly calculated affairs of state, we can get back behind the complex dynamics between commercial, fiscal, and administrative politics in modern European empires.

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[132] On the renewed strength of state-led approaches to colonization within the Board of Trade in this period, see Edelson, *New Map of Empire*, ch. 3.
[133] Bollan, "Importance and Advantage," 74-77.
[134] Bollan, "Importance and Advantage," 77-80.

Figure 2. Section of Nicolas Denys's 1672 "Carte de l'Acadie et des Pays compris entre le Rivière Pentagouet, le Cap-Breton et le Saint-Laurent." Denys's map, published in 1672, included only an imaginative outline of Cape Breton Island, which had not yet been mapped, sounded, or surveyed in

detail. Source: BnF, GE D-1141.

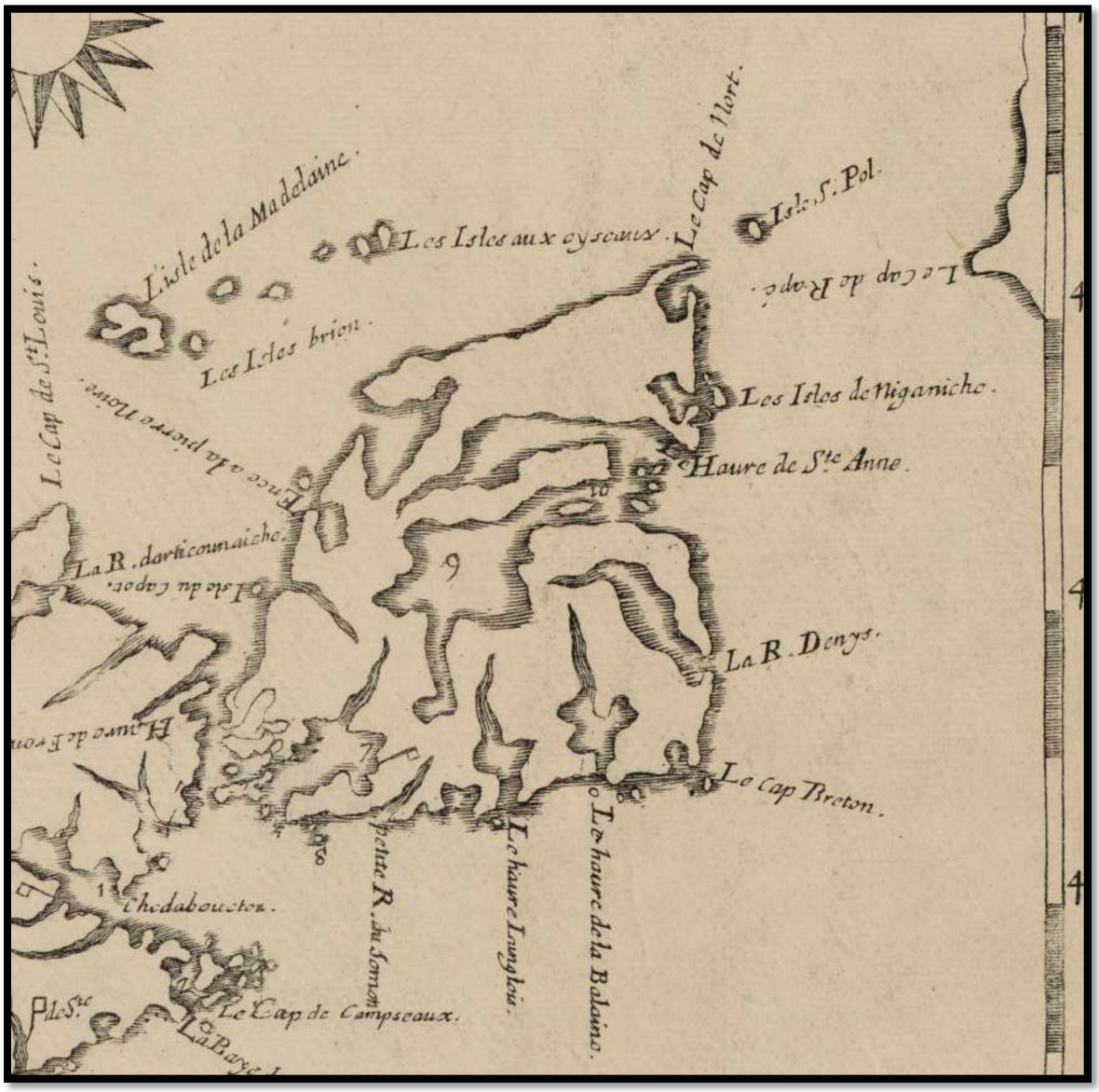


Figure 3. Jean-Baptiste Franquelin's map of Acadia, produced in 1702 (with excerpted section below). Part of a series covering the maritime Northeast, drawn between 1685 and 1712 and commissioned by the ministry of Marine, this map provided the most detailed and accurate representation of Cape Breton (at far right) available to Pontchartrain before L'Hermitte's expedition produced a new series in 1713.

Source: LAC, General Maps of the Maritime Provinces, MIKAN 4125184.

Figure 4. Jacques L'Hermitte's 1713 "Carte d'une Partie de l'Isle du Cap Breton." On Pontchartrain's orders, L'Hermitte, a royal engineer, produced several detailed maps and soundings of the Cape Breton coast in order to help the ministry choose the best location for Raudot's projected entrepôt. Source: BnF, Portefeuille 131 du fonds du Service hydrographique de la Marine consacré à l'Ile du Cap-Breton

et à l'Ile de Sable, vue 1.

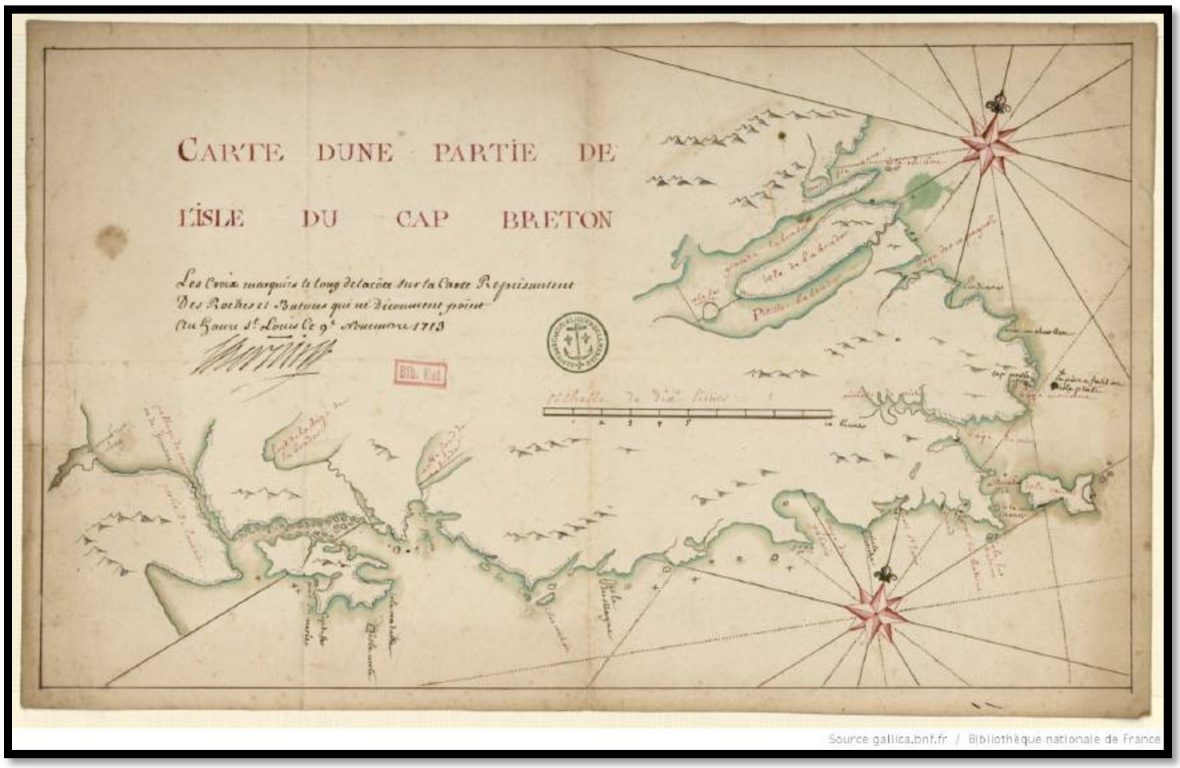


Figure 5. Portion of Nicolas Le Fer's "L'Amérique du Nord et du Sud." Canadian beavers, with Niagara Falls in background, labor on the margins of Nicolas Le Fer's 1698 map of the New World. In implicit contrast to North America's "savage" human inhabitants, these heavily anthropomorphized beavers apply themselves to remaking the landscape, chopping wood, diverting streams, and building

dams out of sticks and mud balanced on their tails—all in such great numbers that their precious pelts carpet the ground. Source: Bibliothèque et Archives Canada, ANC NMC-26825.

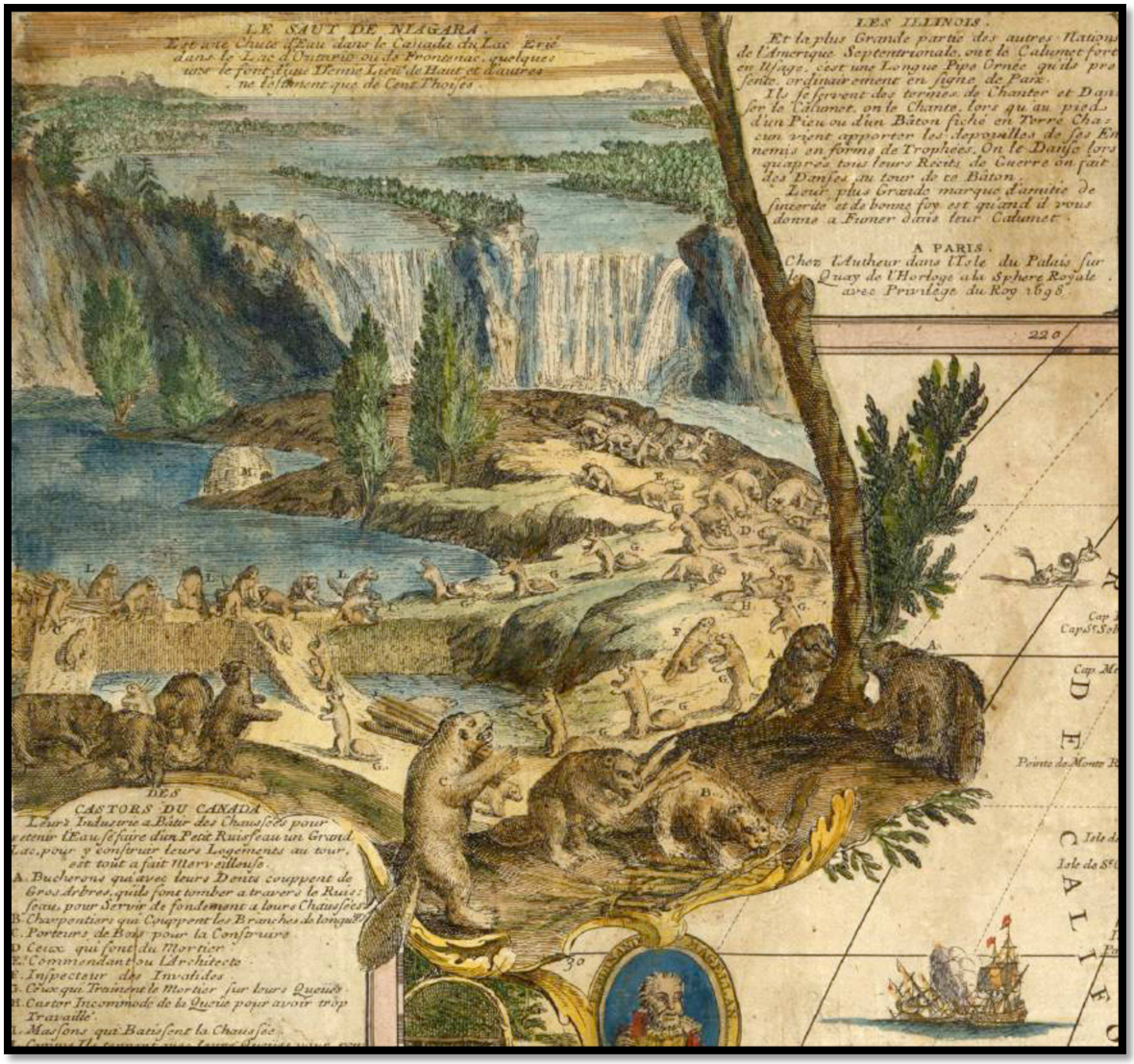
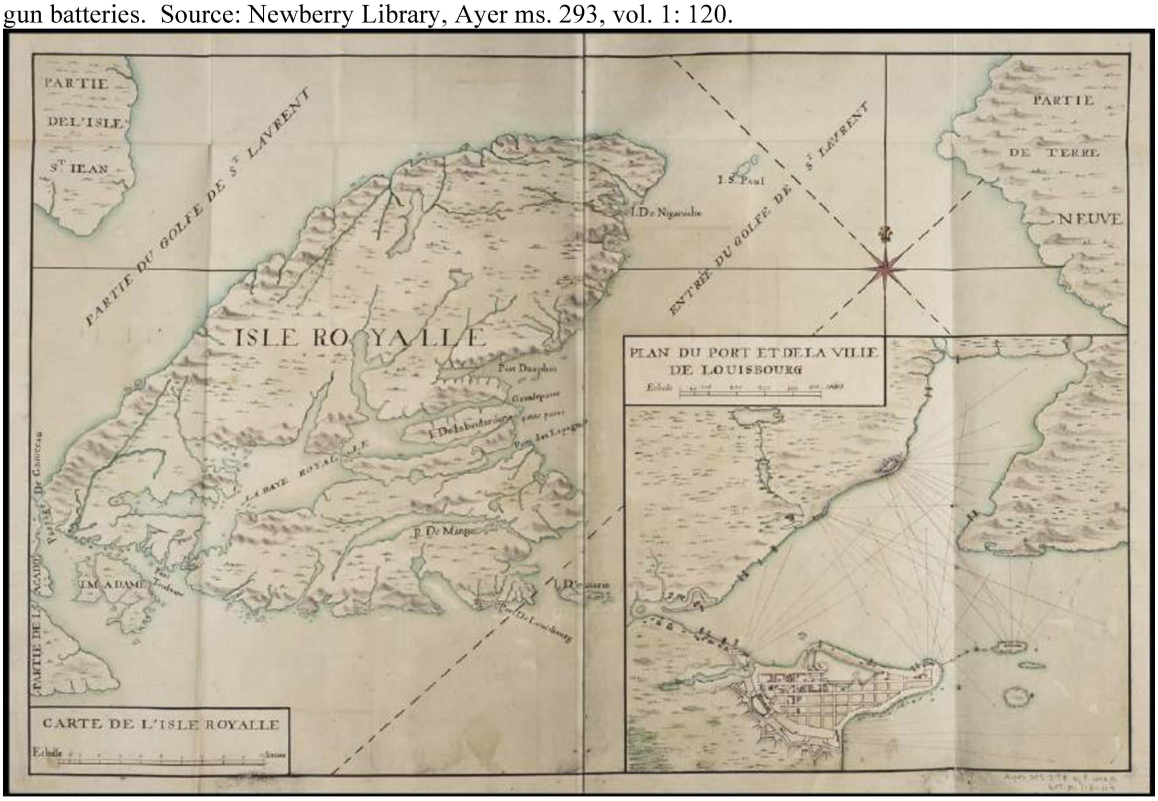


Figure 6. Magnified section of Jacques L'Hermitte's 1713 "Map of a Portion of Cape Breton Island" (Figure 3 above). L'Hermitte named today's Scatarie Island, at center-right, in honor of Raudot.

Figure 7. Anonymous “Carte de l’Isle Royalle,” commissioned by Raudot in 1716. The map shows an overview of the island with key landmarks, as well as the location of rocks and shore at low tide. It also features a close-up of Louisbourg, including the settlement’s magazines, fortifications, bridge, and gun batteries. Source: Newberry Library, Ayer ms. 293, vol. 1: 120.



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Chapter 4. Masks of the Colonizer: "Personas" and Native Diplomacy in New France

"Now I am an Iroquois, & you will permit me to show you a few facts about my Nation."
– Claude-Charles le Roy Bacqueville de La Potherie, *Histoire de l'Amérique septentrionale* (1702)

"As serious as this ceremony was for the Savages, it was for the French a sort of comedy, which they enjoyed very much."
– Pierre-François-Xavier de Charlevoix, *Histoire et description générale de la Nouvelle France* (1744)

In August of 1690, Louis de Buade de Frontenac, governor-general of New France, addressed an urgent council of more than five hundred Native emissaries at Montréal. The colony was at war against the joint forces of New England and the Five Nations of the Iroquois Confederacy—the Oneidas, Mohawks, Onondagas, Cayugas, and Senecas—and Frontenac hoped to persuade his Algonquin, Odawa, Huron, Wabanaki, Nippissing, and Mission Iroquois allies to launch a surprise attack on the Confederacy's homelands in western New York (Figure 1). As *Onontio*, or "Great Mountain," the governor wielded the ritual authority to call together his "savage children," to provide them with gifts and arms, and, if they were so inclined, to mobilize them for battle. But this time Frontenac knew they were dubious. His allies were eager to fight, they assured him, yet some questioned his resolve: did *Onontio* truly want war, or would he abandon his children for a separate peace at the first opportunity?

As the governor concluded his speech with an impassioned call to arms ("I now put the tomahawk back in your hands...& I have no doubt that you will know what to do with it!"), he sensed that words alone would not dispel their doubts. "They asked me to explain myself clearly," he reported afterward, "which I did...in a way that fully satisfied them, by taking up the tomahawk myself and singing the war

song, in order to accommodate their way of doing things."[1] The colonial official and chronicler Claude-Charles Le Roy Bacqueville de La Potherie later described the scene:

> Monsieur de Frontenac, Hatchet in hand, began the War song; the principal French Leaders, with similar weapons, joined him, [and] all sang it together. The [Mission] Iroquois...the Hurons & the Nippissings also joined the sway. One would have said...that these Actors were possessed by the gestures & the contortions that they were making. The *Sassagouez*, or cries & howls, that Monsieur de Frontenac was obliged to make in order to conform to their ways, added still further to the Dionysian fury. Then they held the war Feast, which was more of a pillage than a meal.[2]

In La Potherie's telling, the French used what they knew of Native customs to produce "gestures & contortions...cries & howls" convincing enough not just to incite the Indians to war, but even to persuade a European observer that the "Actors" themselves were "possessed" by a "Dionysian fury" of their own making. To stir their allies' passions, he claimed, Frontenac and his officers were "obliged" to "conform to their ways."

This chapter examines how the embodiment of *Onontio* drew together two branches of learning: the administrative ethnography of Indians, and the performance of Native passions. To French officials, Natives were both objects of study whose "nature" could be defined and routine interlocutors whose feelings must be "managed" in face-to-face settings. Securing their compliance required not only a working knowledge of their traditions and values, but also a diplomatic persona

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[1] Frontenac to Phélypeaux de Pontchartrain, 12 November 1690, reproduced in *Rapport de l'archiviste de la province de Québec* (1927-1928), ed. Pierre-Georges Roy (Québec: Proulx, 1928), 38.
[2] Claude-Charles le Roy "Bacqueville" de la Potherie, *Histoire de l'Amérique septentrionale* (Paris: Nyon, 1753 ed. [orig. 1702]), t. III: 96-98.

whose deportment would inspire their respect and affection. In their efforts to understand and manipulate Native peoples, I argue, royal officers fused aristocratic habits of performance nurtured in metropolitan schoolrooms, at court, and in public life with the expertise of missionaries and other go-betweens who had lived among the Indians and knew—or claimed to know—how to accommodate them. The unfamiliar demands of Native diplomacy encouraged them to observe their allies closely, to record their customs and behavior, and to construct an essential idea of their character that could be used to better control them. In short, by adopting a Native persona as the face of their diplomacy, the French made both "knowing" Indians and performing "Indianness" central to the governance of their North American empire.

Playing the part of a Native alliance chief was not altogether farfetched for aristocratic officials who treated their lives as one long theatrical display. Indeed, for noblemen throughout the French Atlantic world, the temporary and deliberate embodiment of multiple personas through changes of dress, deportment, or affect was a fixture of life from an early age and across a variety of social situations. Incorporating their "habit of alterity" into the history of Franco-Native diplomacy reveals the performative baggage they brought with them to the council fire.[3] If, as historians have often observed, early modern noblemen behaved as if on a stage, practiced the art of strategic dissimulation, and channeled the words and feelings of classical orators, they were also primed to personify *Onontio*.

[3] For "habit of alterity," see Lynn Enterline, *Shakespeare's Schoolroom: Rhetoric, Discipline, Emotion* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012), 7-8.

The strategic imitation of Native customs was vital because no other European empire depended more heavily upon indigenous allies than France. The French were never able or willing to establish a large settler colony in the New World, nor did they ever manage to subjugate or assimilate more than a handful of Natives. By maintaining a delicate suite of alliances with the Iroquoian- and Algonquian-speaking nations of the Great Lakes and the Saint Lawrence Valley, however, officials in New France were able to project an imperial presence that stretched, at its zenith, from Biloxi to Hudson's Bay and from Acadia to the Mississippi Basin—challenging the more populous colonies of Great Britain for access to the peoples, furs, and territories of the North American interior. Those alliances were forged according to diplomatic protocols that were fundamentally indigenous. As a result, their survival rested in part upon the ability of French negotiators to perform the ritual role assigned to them by their allies—"to accommodate their way of doing things," as Frontenac put it.[4]

Imitation, as both a practice and a concept, has preoccupied scholars of empire for more than half a century, and their work has approached it primarily in one of two ways: first, as a source of ambivalence to colonizers, or second, as a strategy of resistance or identity formation among the colonized. For imperialist thinkers, having "savage" peoples imitate "civilized" customs was at once an effective way to assimilate them and a potentially subversive practice that blurred the very distinctions on which European superiority was founded; for their colonial subjects, it offered a means of claiming citizenship, mocking imperialist pretensions, or otherwise

[4] On the particular importance of intercultural diplomacy to the survival of France's North American empire, see Paul Cohen, "The power of apprehending 'otherness': cultural intermediaries as imperial agents in New France," in *Encountering Otherness: Diversities and Transcultural Experiences in Early Modern European Culture*, ed. Guido Abbattista (Trieste: Edizioni Università di Trieste, 2011): 223-237.

reappropriating elements of a foreign culture to serve their own purposes.[5] In both cases, the descriptive vocabulary invoked by scholars has varied—from "mimesis" and "mimicry" to "copying," "counterfeiting," "incorporation," "surrogation," and "emulation," each of which conveys different shades of meaning according to its precise use. Yet all of these terms form part of a single constellation of ideas surrounding imitation as a cultural phenomenon that took on special significance in the context of Western imperial expansion and decline.[6]

Historians and social scientists have devoted far less attention to imitation in a third guise: as an everyday tool of domination used by colonizers living among their subjects and allies. Recently, however, a handful of scholars has recast "mimesis and imitation...as practices through which colonial agents organized their social lives, daily routines and strategies in relation to the local worlds they encountered."[7] Servants of empire, they find, appropriated indigenous customs out of holy zeal, commercial interest, academic curiosity, personal taste, political protest, a sense of duty, or the instinct to survive. European officials "could fear its dangers"—namely, degradation and "indigenization"—"but they could also manipulate its virtues" to

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[5] Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks* (New York: Grove, 2008 ed. [orig. 1952]); Homi K. Bhabha, "Of Mimicry and Man: The Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse," in *The Location of Culture* (London: Taylor and Francis, 2012 ed. [orig. 1994]); Michael Taussig, *Mimesis and Alterity: A Particular History of the Senses* (London: Routledge, 1993); Emanuelle Saada, "Entre 'Assimilation' et 'Décivilisation': L'Imitation et le Projet Colonial Républicain," *Terrain*, vol. 44 (2005): 19-38; Barbara Fuchs, *Mimesis and Empire: The New World, Islam, and European Identities* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2001); Joseph Roach, *Cities of the Dead: Circum-Atlantic Performance* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996); Ricardo Roque, "Mimesis and Colonialism: Emerging Perspectives on a Shared History," *History Compass*, vol. 13, no. 4 (2015): 201-206.

[6] Roque, "Mimesis and Colonialism": 201.

[7] Roque, "Mimesis and Colonialism": 208. Also see Robert J. Gordon, "Unsettled Settlers: Internal Pacification and Vagrancy in Namibia," in *Ethnography in Unstable Places: Everyday Lives in Contexts of Dramatic Political Change*, eds. Carol J. Greenhouse et al. (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2002), 61-84.

make their authority legible and legitimate.[8] Their imitations allowed them to learn about local societies and then to use that learning to refine their own "repertoires of power."[9]

Historians of New France have long known that French officers adopted Native customs of oratory, ceremony, and kinship in their diplomacy, but most have characterized these accommodations as spontaneous and isolated responses to dynamics on the ground, rather than self-conscious performances conditioned by cultural currents in France. In perhaps the most influential study of cross-cultural encounters in colonial North America, Richard White argued that Europeans and Natives arrived at a "common conception of suitable ways of acting" through mutual observation, "misunderstandings," and spontaneous "invention." For White, the Old World baggage of European officials was largely irrelevant to this "middle ground...in between cultures" where neither side could fully impose its own norms on the other.[10] Subsequent scholarship has challenged his vision as overly consensual, static, inattentive to the complexities of Native agency, or unable to explain the increasingly coercive presence of European empires in North America, yet few historians have questioned the underlying notion that Franco-Native relations were shaped by forces that were fundamentally local. There remains a pervasive assumption that metropolitan practices and preconceptions were marginal to Native

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[8] Roque, "Mimesis and Colonialism": 207-208.

[9] See, for example, Ananya Chakravarti's study of Jesuit imitation and accommodation in southern India. Chakravarti, "The Many Faces of Baltasar da Costa: *Imitatio* and *Accommodatio* in the Seventeenth Century Madurai Mission," *Etnográfica*, vol. 18, no. 1 (2014): 135-158. For "repertoires of power," see Jane Burbank and Frederick Cooper, *Empires in World History: Power and the Politics of Difference* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2010), 3.

[10] Richard White, *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650-1815* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2010 ed. [orig. 1991]), preface.

diplomacy and, consequently, that French sources have little to add to a story best told through colonial and ethnographic records.[11]

Scholars of late, however, have taken a closer look at the ingrained cultural habits that shaped the personas who faced each other across the council fire. Gilles Havard has argued that episodes of mimesis, such as Frontenac's war dance, were crucial scenes in an imperial "theater of power" where the French, blessed with a "greater intellectual distance" from their own norms, outperformed Natives whose worldview was "hostile *a priori* to any self-critical stance." For Havard, the Old World *habitus* of noble officers was advantageous because its stress on theatricality prepared them to mimic the modes of dance, speech, and warfare practiced by their allies.[12] On the Native side, Michael Witgen has found that Nippissing, Odawa,

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[11] Histories of the simultaneous Catholic missionary campaigns in France and New France, meanwhile, provide an illustration of how much more we can learn about European-Native encounters when colonial and metropolitan sources are studied together. See Axtell, *The Invasion Within: The Contest of Cultures in Colonial North America* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1986); Dominique Deslandres, *Croire et faire croire: les missions françaises au XVIIe siècle* (Paris: Fayard, 2003); Allan Greer, Mohawk Saint: Catherine Tekakwitha and the Jesuits (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005). Recently, Peter Cook, Gilles Havard, Sahlia Belmessous, Brett Rushforth, Robert Michael Morissey, and Alexandre Dubé, in various ways, have shown how a confluence of subtle and long-term shifts in demography, diplomatic rhetoric, Native political strategies, and French conceptions of sovereignty and assimilation served to amplify French influence on Native ground, even as Indians manipulated negotiations to achieve their own ends. Their works have expanded the field of Native history in New France by linking it more closely to slavery in the Caribbean and to administrative and political developments in the metropole. Peter Cook, "Onontio Gives Birth: How the French in Canada Became Fathers to Their Indigenous Allies, 1645-73," *The Canadian Historical Review*, vol. 96, no. 2 (June 2015): 165-193; Havard, "'Protection' and 'Unequal Alliance': The French Conception of Sovereignty Over Indians in New France," in Englebert and Teasdale, eds., Robert Englebert and Guillaume Teasdale, eds., *French and Indians in the Heart of North America, 1630-1815* (East Lansing and Winnipeg: Michigan State University Press and University of Manitoba Press, 2013), 113-137; Robert Michael Morrissey, "The Terms of Encounter: Language and Contested Visions of French Colonization in the Illinois Country, 1673-1702," in ibid, 43-75; Alexandre Dubé, "Les Amérindiens sous le regard des bureaux de la Marine (1660-1760). Quelque pistes de réflexion sur un objet administratif," in *Un continent en partage: cinq siècles de rencontres entre Amérindiens et Français*, eds. Havard and Augeron, 153-175; Sahlia Belmessous, "Assimilation and Racialism in Seventeenth and Eighteenth-Century French Colonial Policy," *American Historical Review*, vol. 110, no. 2 (2005): 322-349; Brett Rushforth, *Bonds of Alliance: Indigenous and Atlantic Slaveries in New France* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 2012).

[12] Havard, "Le rire des jésuites : une archéologie du mimétisme dans la rencontre franco-amérindienne (XVIIe-XVIIIe siècle)," *Annales. Histoire, Sciences Sociales*, 62e année, no. 3 (2007): 542-544. See

Ojibwe, and Algonquin headmen deployed supple forms of "shape-shifting" to engage in strategic posturing of their own. Drawing on a mythology rich in tricksters and a "habit of mind" that privileged "the potential for interconnection between different groups of peoples," these Anishinaabeg used ritual "metamorphoses" to build and break fictive kinships with the French, to slide seamlessly between Native and Christian identities, and to create flexible social ties with the Dakota and other nations in ways that enhanced their power along the Great Lakes.[13] While Havard and Witgen disagree about the relative adaptability of French and indigenous cultures, both recast Native diplomacy as a strategic interplay of personas. Their work invites us to situate those personas more deeply within the cultural hinterland of negotiators on all sides. In the case of the French, it raises the question of how the experience of performing "Indianness" informed enduring administrative ideas about how to govern a "savage" empire.

To that end, it is worth knowing more about the kind of men who embodied *Onontio*. To be an aristocratic man in late seventeenth-century France implied a place of honor, authority, and stewardship over the rest of society that applied anywhere he went. Nobles were bred to dominate—indeed, by mid-century, most took it for granted that nobility was a social order defined by birth rather than a mere "profession" exercised by the virtuous—and they increasingly viewed themselves as reformers of a rough-hewn, vulgar, and violent common people whose culture they

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also Havard, *Empire et métissages: Indiens et Français dans le Pays d'en Haut, 1660-1715* (Paris: Septentrion, 2003) and *The Great Peace of Montréal of 1701: French-Native Diplomacy in the Seventeenth Century* (Montréal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2001).

[13] Michael Witgen, *An Infinity of Nations: How the Native New World Shaped Early North America* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011).

had shared only a few generations before.[14] As the kingdom's leading landowners, clerics, and royal servants, they understood their command of the "lower orders" to be a natural, even divine state of affairs that required them to exercise not only coercive force but also persuasion and condescension. Knowing how to behave toward one's inferiors in any given situation was considered an essential quality of nobility, and conduct books of the period lingered over the day-to-day habits that would inspire affection and obedience among one's tenants, troops, parishioners, and retainers in sites as disparate as the royal court and the country estate.[15]

To modern eyes, aristocratic attempts to reform the common people of Europe seem worlds away from their efforts to govern and "civilize" the Indians of North America, and scholars have tended to study them as separate problems of class formation, on the one hand, and racialization, on the other. But contemporaries drew no such clear distinction. In the late sixteenth century, scandalized Jesuits preaching west of Seville complained that the villagers of Huelva "resembled Indians rather than Spaniards." Sir Benjamin Rudyerd, speaking to the House of Commons in 1628, derided parts of northern England and Wales "which were scarce in Christendom, where God was little better known than amongst the Indians."[16] Such critics knew full well that peasants and Natives were not the same—most important, Indians had not yet heard the Word of God—but the differences were fine enough that both were

[14] On ideas of nobility in this period, see Ellery Schalk, *From Valor to Pedigree: Ideas of Nobility in France in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2014 ed. [orig. 1986]), 115-116. On aristocratic attitudes toward popular culture and the policing of the lower orders, see Peter Burke, *Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1978), 270-281; Robert Muchembled, *L'invention de l'homme moderne* (Paris: Fayard, 1988).

[15] See, for example, the anonymous pamphlet intended for schoolboys of the Collège de La Fleche, *Maximes de la bienseance & conversation ordinaire entre les hommes* (Lyon: Morillon, 1618), Serres' *Théâtre d'Agriculture* (discussed in Chapter 2), and the later works by Faret et al examined below.

[16] Quoted in Burke, *Popular Culture*, 208.

subjected to nearly identical missionary campaigns, run by many of the same people.[17] In both cases, reformers used a rhetoric of "savagery" to denote the unrestrained passions, impulsive behavior, barbarous language, and appalling ignorance of laws both human and divine that seemed to prevail among peoples who lived "more like beasts than like men." Crucially, too, both types of "savage" were thought capable of redemption and refinement, since they were taken to be immature versions of civilized men, not unknowable Others imprisoned within fixed and intrinsic categories of race or class.[18]

The impersonation of Indians in diplomatic settings, like the parallel missions to civilize the "savages" of Europe and America, make us question broader assumptions about the supposedly corrosive effect of Native encounters upon French identity. Over the past two decades, historians of the Atlantic world have cast imperial frontiers and borderlands as crucibles of a creolized selfhood in which ideas of "Europeanness" (and "Indianness") were tested and reforged. Traders, missionaries, soldiers, captives, colonists, and interpreters, they find, borrowed liberally from indigenous languages and traditions and in some cases married into Native communities.[19] For some scholars, the inability or unwillingness of these men

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[17] On the connections between missionary campaigns in France and New France, see Deslandres, *Croire et faire croire*; Greer, *Mohawk Saint*, 79-84.

[18] Anthony Pagden, *European Encounters with the New World* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), 117-140; Carole Blackburn, *Harvest of Souls: The Jesuit Missions and Colonialism in North America, 1632-1650* (Montréal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2000), 45-46; "Sauvage," in *Dictionnaire de l'Académie française* (1694).

[19] The relevant literature is vast, encompassing imperial, borderlands, and New Indian histories of encounter across a variety of colonial contexts. For some useful surveys and touchstone works, see White, *The Middle Ground*; Nicholas Canny and Anthony Pagden, eds., *Colonial Identity in the Atlantic World, 1500-1800* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1989); John D. Garrigus, ed., *Assumed Identities: The Meanings of Race in the Atlantic World* (College Station, TX: Texas A&M University Press, 2010); Gilles Havard and Mickaël Augeron, eds., *Un continent en partage: cinq siècles de rencontres entre Amérindiens et Français* (Paris: Les Indes savantes, 2013); Havard, *Empire*

and women to strictly maintain the trappings of Frenchness in the face of indigenous ways of life reveals the "fragility of Western Culture" in American spaces.[20] While most historians have been careful to emphasize that few Europeans ever fully "went Native," their overwhelming emphasis on hybridity, borrowing, and creole ethnogenesis gives the impression that French identity was a flimsy construct subject to erosion by the experience of empire.[21]

Yet this impression can be misleading. It becomes manifestly overdrawn, in particular, in reference to those French who did not stray far onto Native ground.[22] Most colonists who remained within French settlements in Canada or the Caribbean, and who left behind evidence of their private lives, seem to have clung tenaciously to their metropolitan customs and connections. Their practices of correspondence, consumption, reading, religion, dress, décor, and sociability remained overwhelmingly European, and consciously so. Their spoken French even drew praise for its "purity."[23] When abroad, they recreated their former lives as best they

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et métissages; James Axtell, *The Invasion Within: The Contest of Cultures in North America* (New York: Oxford University Press USA, 1986); Philip P. Boucher, *Cannibal Encounters: Europeans and Island Caribs, 1492-1763* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992); Juliana Barr, *Peace Came in the Form of a Woman: Indians and Spaniards in the Texas Borderlands* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009); Guido Abbattista, ed., *Encountering Otherness: Diversities and Transcultural Experiences in Early Modern European Culture* (Trieste: Edizioni Università di Trieste, 2011); Jacqueline A. Peterson and Jennifer S. H. Brown, eds, *The New Peoples: Being and Becoming Métis in North America* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1985); Anne F. Hyde, *Empires, Nations, and Families* (2011).

[20] See, for example, Gilles Havard, "Le rire des jésuites,": 573.

[21] On the French case in particular, see the recent works of Sophie White, *Wild Frenchmen and Frenchified Indians: Material Culture and Race in Colonial Louisiana* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013); Doris Garraway, *The Libertine Colony: Creolization in the Early French Caribbean* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2005); Belmessous, "Assimilation and Racialism"; Shannon Lee Dawdy, *Building the Devil's Empire: French Colonial New Orleans* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008).

[22] Though even the *coureurs de bois*, whose propensity to live among Natives so scandalized French administrators and churchmen, did not cease to be "French." See White, *The Middle Ground*.

[23] Observers consistently remarked upon the purity of French spoken in New France. "We speak perfectly well here in Canada, without any bad accent," observed Claude-Charles le Roy "Bacqueville"

could. "I would never have believed there were so many persons of Condition living here," Intendant Jacques De Meulles confessed to his counterpart at Rochefort, "...We live in Quebek as we do in france."[24] As De Meulles' observation suggests, adherence to metropolitan norms was all the more pronounced among nobles and bourgeois who did not expect to remain in the colonies for long.[25] The writings of prominent colonists and officials such as the Dessalles and d'Aubigné families at Martinique, Lucie de La Tour du Pin in upstate New York, the merchants of Québec, and the administrators studied here all speak to the close and abiding identification that those in the New World felt with France throughout the period of colonization. There is an extent to which all of them behaved differently in colonial settings, but upon returning to the metropole, they slid seamlessly back into French society as if they had never left.[26]

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de la Potherie in 1702. "One could send an opera to Canada," claimed the grammarian Pierre-Joseph Thoulier d'Olivet three decades later, "and it would be sung at Québec, note for note, in the same tone as it would be at Paris. But one could not send a sentence of conversation to Montpellier or Bordeaux and have it pronounced, syllable for syllable, as it would be at Court." After years of living and traveling in New France in the early eighteenth century, Father Pierre François Xavier de Charlevoix concluded that "Nowhere else does one speak our language more purely." Even the Marquis de Montcalm, who otherwise thought little of the *Canadiens* he commanded during the Seven Years' War, conceded that they "speak French very well." Olivet, *Traité de la prosodie françoise* (Paris: Gandouin, 1736), 27; Charlevoix, Bacqueville de La Potherie, and Montcalm all quoted in William F. Mackey, "The Foundations," in *Language in Canada*, ed. John Edwards (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 28.

[24] De Meulles to Arnoul, 5 November 1683, BnF NAF 21430, f. 351.

[25] John Clive and Bernard Bailyn have observed the same phenomenon in Britain's "cultural provinces." Clive and Bailyn, "England's Cultural Provinces: Scotland and America," *The William and Mary Quarterly*, vol. 11, no. 2 (April 1954): 200-213. See also Julie Flavell, *When London was Capital of America* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2010).

[26] Henrietta-Lucy Dillon de la Tour du Pin Gouvernet, *Journal d'une femme de cinquante ans (1778-1815)*, 2 vols. (Paris: Berger-Levrault, 1925); Robert and Elborg Forster, eds., *Sugar and Slavery, Family and Race: The Letters and Diary of Pierre Dessalles, Planter in Martinique, 1808-1856*; Dale Miquelon, *Dugard of Rouen: French Trade to Canada and the West Indies, 1729-1770* (Montréal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1978); Lloyd Kramer, *Lafayette in Two Worlds: Public Cultures & Personal Identities in an Age of Revolutions* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996); François Furstenberg, *When the United States Spoke French: Five Refugees Who Shaped a Nation* (New York: Penguin, 2014).

The notion that French identity was a fragile construct is problematic not only because it discounts the resilience of colonists' Old World "selves," but also because it presupposes fixed notions of Frenchness at a time when that category itself was still emerging. How can we measure the loss of French identity when the meaning of "French" had not yet become a subject of extended study and reflection, as would happen from the middle of the eighteenth century onward? If anything, the experience of empire seems to have done as much to reinforce burgeoning national identities as it did to weaken them.[27] In this context, historians would do better to "[reconstruct] individual cultural adaptations" on their own terms, "without any forced recourse to identity."[28]

In the case of those French who, like Frontenac, accommodated indigenous customs without "going Native," *persona* (literally: "mask") offers a more useful analytical concept than identity. As shorthand for an alter ego temporarily assumed to achieve a social or political end—as opposed to a more or less cohesive and abiding interior sense of self—persona aptly captures the tendency of seventeenth-

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[27] David Bell, "English Barbarians, French Martyrs," in *The Cult of the Nation in France: Inventing Nationalism, 1680-1800* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009), 78-106; "French Identities in Eighteenth-Century North America," in *Foreigners and Citizens: France, the Americas, and Europe, 18th-20th Centuries*, eds. Peter Sahlins and Laurent Dubois [unpublished]; David Armitage, *The Ideological Origins of the British Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000); Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707-1837* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005). See also Christopher Hodson's critique of the pervasive belief that Acadian resettlement in France following the Seven Years' War foundered upon a nascent "Acadian identity." Hodson, "Colonizing the *Patrie*: An Experiment Gone Wrong in Old Regime France," *French Historical Studies*, vol. 32, no. 2 (Spring 2009): 193-222.

[28] On the limited usefulness of "identity" as a category of analysis in the early modern Atlantic world, see Christopher Hodson, "Weird Science: Identity in the Atlantic World," *The William and Mary Quarterly*, vol. 68, no. 2 (April 2011): 227-232 ("individual cultural adaptations" quote on 231-232). See also Rogers Brubaker and Fred Cooper, "Beyond 'Identity,'" *Theory and Society*, vol. 29, no. 1 (February 2000): 1-47. Gilles Havard has proposed using a sliding scale to measure degrees of "indianization." Havard, "Le rire des jésuites."

century aristocrats to define themselves by the scrutiny of others.[29] Royal administrators quite consciously adjusted their speech and behavior to appeal to Indian audiences, but their conformity to Native norms did not amount to lasting identification or even acceptance; rather, it was instrumental and often begrudging. To exercise some measure of influence over their powerful but alien allies, the king's men learned to imitate them. In doing so, they extended an aristocratic habit of performance rooted in Old World practices of rhetoric, drama, dance, diplomacy, and courtly dissimulation to the New World.

Strategic impersonation did not mean successful manipulation. Successive wars with the Haudenosaunee (Iroquois) and the Mesquakie (Fox) were too multifaceted, and the French too weak or inflexible or underinformed, for even the most competent diplomacy to realize the king's vaunting ambitions to defeat the Five Nations, dominate the fur trade, and isolate the English along the Atlantic seaboard. French negotiators, moreover, could not always reconcile royal policy or their own self-interest with the competing agendas of their Indian allies (which, however difficult to extract from French sources, were plainly just as various and changing). In examining diplomatic performances in this period, the following pages will explain not how France's diplomacy succeeded or failed, but how officials acquired, deployed, and disseminated the knowledge and skills they believed necessary to accommodate the Native "way of doing things" in their encounters.

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[29] On distinctions between "self" and "persona" as categories of (literary) analysis, see Barry N. Olshen, "Subject, Persona, and Self in the Theory of Autobiography," *Auto/Biography*, vol. 10, no. 1 (1995): 5-16. For an analysis of the early modern "self" as a sense anchored in one's external surroundings and social relations, see Guido Ruggiero, *Machiavelli in Love: Sex, Self, and Society in the Italian Renaissance* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008). For a critique of persona as a "pallid" category of analysis that fails to capture the rich emotional experience that lay behind the theatrical habits of early modern people, see Enterline, *Shakespeare's Schoolroom*, 29.

Aristocratic Actors: Cultures of Persuasion and Performance in France

Well before they arrived on American shores, French administrators were extensively trained in the play of personas. Indeed, pretense and performance were fixtures of life in the aristocratic social circles from which most royal officers came. From a tender age, noblemen were taught to speak and behave like self-composed adults. Their schooling demanded personation and identification. In the Jesuit *collèges* that many of them attended, they learned to debate both sides of every question, and they were enjoined, following Cicero, to move their listeners by first feeling themselves what they would have others feel.[30] Extensive training in rhetoric "[transported] them to other countries and other times," where an orator's gestures and expression were as important as his words, since "gestures are understood by all nations."[31] The animating principle behind classical oratory was that a good speaker crafts every phrase and every movement to the needs and passions of his listeners.[32] In imitating the style of Demosthenes, Seneca, and other Ancient orators, *collégiens* practiced persuasion "much less by the truth of the facts...than by a sort of charismatic momentum, one would almost say drunkenness."[33] Like the "Dionysian fury" incited by Frontenac and his men, this "charismatic momentum" was calculated to win the hearts of those who could not be swayed by words alone.

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[30] On the instruction of young noblemen, see Mark Motley, *Becoming a French Aristocrat* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1990); L. W. B. Brockliss, *French Higher Education in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries: A Cultural History* (New York, 1987); and for an illuminating English comparison, Enterline, *Shakespeare's Schoolroom*.

[31] Charles Rollin, *Discours préliminaire au Traité des études* (1726), quoted in Georges Snyders, *La pédagogie en france aux XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1964), 75; René Bary, *Méthode pour bien prononcer un discours et pour le bien animer* (Paris: D. Thierry, 1679), 71.

[32] Anthony Grafton, "The Soul's Entrepreneurs," *The New York Review of Books* (3 March 1994).

[33] Snyders, *La pédagogie*, 123.

The *collèges* likewise taught their pupils to reach audiences through the dramatic momentum of the stage. From the late sixteenth century onward, theater held an increasingly prominent place in the Jesuit curriculum, and by 1650 the order had established roughly 500 theaters across Europe. Plays flavored with pyrotechnics, pantomimes, falling idols, and soaring saints gave students an immersive outlet for their talents. (It is no accident that the century's leading French dramatists, Pierre Corneille and Molière, received their first taste of theater in the *collèges*.) The Jesuits believed that public plays, like pageants, poetry contests, and disputations, excited healthy competition among boys while reinforcing rhetorical and moral lessons: pupils learned to experience vicariously the inner lives of characters both Ancient and Modern, to convey their emotions believably, and to see their positive and negative qualities as models for action. Jesuit pedagogues considered performative skills essential to young men who would one day be leaders. "Whereas an ordinary peasant is nearly invisible to society," the thinking went, "to be a leader is to be looked up to and therefore to be looked *at*, to be scrutinized, by those one leads."[34]

The studied play of affect and persuasion in the *collèges* thus aimed to prepare young noblemen for the everyday demands of public life. The social and political legitimacy of aristocratic power turned upon the possession of honor, and honor was something claimed and contested in a variety of "scripted" performances ranging

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[34] Gustave Dupont-Ferrier, *Du Collège de Clermont au Lycée Louis-le-Grand (1563-1920)* (Paris: Boccard, 1925), 239-272; John W. O'Malley, *The First Jesuits* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993), 221-225; Grafton, "Soul's Entrepreneurs"; Jennifer A. Herdt, *Putting on Virtue: The Legacy of the Splendid Vices* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010), 133-135 ("leader" on 135); Bruna Filippi, "The Orator's Performance: Gesture, Word, and Image in Theatre at the Collegio Romano," in *The Jesuits II: Cultures, Sciences, and the Arts, 1540-1773*, eds. John W. O'Malley et al. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006), 512-529.

from duels and alms-giving to deathbed confessions.[35] In an increasingly stratified society where status was measured by ritualized courtesies exchanged or withheld in face-to-face encounters, hiding one's true feelings behind a polite façade became a practiced art. "This talent of being a good actor," noted the Chevalier de Méré in his treatise on manners, "seems to me quite necessary for people of high society."[36] By mid-century, the dizzying array of salutations, regards, bows, *bisous*, deferences, doffings of hats, and other politesses due between individuals of rank were so complex and refined that leading authorities considered them to be a field of knowledge (*science*) in their own right.[37] The proliferation of civilities, combined with a rising tide of new and minor nobles seeking their fortunes in town or at court, fueled a boon market for etiquette manuals, which accounted for twenty unique editions in France between 1690 and 1699 alone.[38]

Such knowledge was thought vital to élite men whose duties would introduce them to all manner of people in arenas ranging from the battlefield to the boudoir. In one of the century's leading guides to gentlemanly conduct, Nicolas Faret stressed the necessity of flexibly adapting one's deportment to every possible situation. "He who has a well-formed mind adjusts himself to all that he encounters," Faret instructed, "he is so accommodating and does everything in such a way that he seems to have a

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[35] See, for example, James Farr, "The Death of a Judge: Performance, Honor, and Legitimacy in Seventeenth-Century France," *The Journal of Modern History*, vol. 75, no. 1 (March 2003): 1-22.
[36] Antoine Gombaud, Chevalier de Méré, *Oeuvres*, ed. C.-H. Boudhors (Paris: Roches, 1930 [orig. 1677]), t. I: 42.
[37] One of these authorities was Antoine de Courtin, whose courtesy manual, the *Nouveau traité de la civilité* (1671), was the most frequently republished book of its kind in seventeenth-century France. Orest Ranum, "Courtesy, Absolutism, and the Rise of the French State, 1630-1660," *The Journal of Modern History*, vol. 52, no. 3 (1980): 429. See also François de Callières, *De la science du monde, et des connoissances utiles à la conduite de la vie* (Paris: Ganeau, 1717).
[38] Robert Muchembled, *La société policée: politique et politesse en France du XVIe au XXe siècles* (Paris: Seuil, 1998), 171.

particular inclination for all that he does. There are no humors so extreme that he cannot live without challenging them, nor any so strange that he cannot find sympathy with them." Like other commentators of the time, Faret took care to distinguish judicious dissimulation from rank deception, but he took some measure of pretense to be essential to social intercourse, and he believed that an ideal gentleman could discover enough of himself in anyone he met to produce a mutual "sympathy."[39]

For aristocratic men, moving through the drama of life required more than the correct words and gestures: it also demanded the right steps. The same masters who drilled young noblemen in social etiquette also taught them proper posture, poise, grace of bearing—and dance. As one instructor declared, dance was a means of "disciplining all of the body's movements, & fixing them in their proper positions."[40] Another declared it "a beautiful art & necessary to public life."[41] Dance at once cultivated and displayed all of the classical virtues of serenity, grandeur, and self-possession associated with good breeding. It also encoded the social and political hierarchies of the court, where the king himself participated in over thirty ballets and countless masked balls.[42] Louis XIV masqueraded as a muse, a Fury, a nymph, a shepherd, Apollo, Mars, a slave, a bacchante, and of course the sun, while his courtiers dressed as lawyers, peasants, foreigners, infants, Amazons, harlequins, and

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[39] Nicolas Faret, *L'Honneste-homme, ou l'art de plaire à la Court* (Paris: du Bray, 1630), 169 ("humors"), 93 (*fourberie*).

[40] Pierre Rameau, *Le Maître à danser, qui enseigne la manière de faire tous les différens pas de danse dans toute la régularité de l'art, et de conduire les bras à chaque pas...* (Paris: Villette, 1725), viii-ix.

[41] Thoinot Arbeau, *Orchésographie* (Lengres: J. Des Preyz, 1589), 2. For examples of political and social consequences of discourtesy, see Ranum, "Courtesy and State Formation."

[42] Wendy Hilton, *Dance and Music of Court and Theater* (New York?: Pendragon Press, 1997 ed.), 3; Philippe Beaussant, *Louis XIV artiste* (Paris: Payot, 1999).

ironic, topsy-turvy versions of themselves.[43] Contemporaries took it for granted that dance involved the play of personas. Louis's appearances in female roles, for example, like his brother Philippe's penchant for cross-dressing, were understood by observers to be representational or recreational affairs, not evidence of a compromised "inner" masculinity.[44]

For the sword nobility that staffed France's military officer class, war was yet another stage for the performance of grandeur. In early modern Europe, no strict separation existed between the military and civilian spheres, and aristocratic men passed easily between them—often in the same finery, with their wives, children, servants, and mistresses in tow. During a century when the continent was at peace for all of perhaps two years, warfare was a routine part of life, and officers were expected to demonstrate the same qualities of poise, magnificence, and condescension on the battlefield as they did elsewhere.[45] Summing up conventional wisdom, the military engineer Jean de Laon d'Aigremont noted that a general must have, in addition to courage and zeal, "a readiness of speech, a good countenance, [and] the dexterity to live well among men of war."[46]

Living well among men of war meant knowing how to command the emotions of ordinary troops. "The faith that Soldiers have in [a general] makes it easy for them to imitate him," Laon explained. "If his actions reveal that he is hesitant to risk

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[43] Sarah R. Cohen, "Masquerade as Mode in the French Fashion Print," in *The Clothes That Wear Us: Essays on Dressing and Transgressing in Eighteenth-Century Culture*, eds. Jessica Munns and Penny Richards (Dover, DE: University of Delaware Press, 1999), 176-177.
[44] Joseph Harris, *Hidden Agendas: Cross-Dressing in 17th-Century France* (Tübingen: Gunter Narr Verlag, 2005), 58-62; Mark Franko, "Double Bodies: Androgyny and Power in the Performances of Louis XIV," *Drama Review*, vol. 38, no. 4 (Winter 1994): 71-82.
[45] David A. Bell, *The First Total War: Napoleon's Europe and the Birth of Warfare as We Know it* (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2007), 24-36.
[46] Jean de Laon, sieur d'Aigremont, *Pratiques et maximes de la guerre* (Paris: Loyson, 1652), 10.

himself, he will inspire in them his softness, but if they see him carry himself with heart, they will follow him cheerfully [into battle]." The ease with which an officer mastered his men's feelings implied a great responsibility to govern his own: "he must not make use of these passions but as the wise Navigator uses the wind, which he takes into his sails only as much as he judges necessary to steer his Vessel."[47] Noblemen at war knew that the king, their fellow officers, and their soldiers were watching them, and they deliberately patterned their conduct after heroic warriors of the past. Today their actions seem vainglorious and foolhardy—they routinely rode into battle at the head of their troops, and many wore red to mark themselves out for enemy fire—but they were not "play-acting." Rather, the ostentatious splendor, recklessness, and *sang-froid* they displayed were typical expressions of their aristocratic sense of honor.[48]

The noble culture of performance reached its apogee at Louis's court, where increasingly baroque codes of courtesy were enforced under pain of social exclusion and political isolation. Led by the king himself, members of the royal entourage policed even the most minor breaches of etiquette, since an unguarded word, glance, or gesture might betray weakness or disrespect. In their dogged pursuit of prestige and favor, courtiers such as the Duc de Saint-Simon learned that at Versailles, "one never judges things by what they are"—a seating arrangement, an unexpected absence, the color of a hat—"but by whom they concern"—a minister, a royal favorite, even the king. Saint-Simon praised Louis as the epitome of the self-

[47] Laon, *Pratiques et maximes*, 5-10.
[48] Bell, *Total War*, 33, 43-44.

possessed public man, "completely master of his face, manner, and bearing."[49] "A man who knows the court is master of his gestures, of his eyes and of his face," agreed the court observer and moralist Jean de La Bruyère, "he is profound, impenetrable; he dissimulates bad offices, smiles at his enemies, controls his irritation, disguises his passions, belies his heart, speaks and acts against his feelings."[50] When appearing in public the courtier, like the king, was expected to "compose his attitude and assume another expression as if he should appear upon a stage."[51] The crown never fully succeeded in transforming court politics into politics *tout court* ("domesticating" the nobility in a "gilded cage" of courtly ceremony), but Louis's decided preference to bestow favor through rituals of courtesy and protocol surrounding his person made a contrived front increasingly necessary to advance in his service.[52]

The intensified social and political pressure to disguise one's feelings behind a perpetual mask fueled a cultural obsession with the interplay of outward appearances and inner passions. Seventeenth-century poets, painters, philosophers, and physicians produced a flood of works on the nature of emotions and how to control them. Writers and artists alike saw the passions as "an overbearing and inescapable element of human nature, liable to disrupt any civilized order...unless they were tamed, outwitted, overruled, or seduced."[53] For most mortals, naturally, that was easier said

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[49] Louis de Rouvroy, Duc de Saint-Simon, *Mémoires*, ed. Antoine de Boislisle, t. IV: 67-68.
[50] Jean de La Bruyère, "De la Cour," *Les Caractères, ou les Moeurs de ce siècle* (1688), quoted in Elias, *The Court Society* (Dublin: University College Dublin Press, 2006 ed.),105.
[51] Primi Visconti, *Mémoires sur la vie de Louis XIV: 1673-1681* (Paris: Perrin, 1988 ed.), 28 ("stage").
[52] Elias, *Court Society*; Ranum, "Courtesy and State Formation"; Muchembled, *La société policée*, 123-186.
[53] Susan James, *Passion and Action: The Emotions in Seventeenth-Century Philosophy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 1-4.

than done. The unfailing self-mastery that Saint-Simon celebrated in Louis was praiseworthy not only because it signalled a broader mastery of the kingdom, but also because it was a quality that eluded less exalted beings—an all-too-human shortcoming that supplied endless fodder for humor and tragedy.

As preternatural self-control became a cultural ideal, French theorists of performance-practice began to mine the tension between pretense and passion. They called for a "naturalness" of speech and gesture that implied not just the dexterous use of the tongue, the face, and the hands, but also the selective bearing of the soul. "One must animate himself," instructed the rhetorician Bernard Lamy, "his heart must be ablaze. May it be like a roaring furnace, from which our words emerge aflame with this fire that we wish to light in the hearts of others."[54] Dramatists came to believe that good actors moved audiences by truly inhabiting the roles they played: like good orators, they first felt themselves the passions they wished to inspire. As one devotée of Molière put it,

> The Actor must think of himself as an Orator, who delivers a public speech designed to move the Listener. Two elements are necessary to his success: accent and gesture. Hence he must study his outward appearance and cultivate his pronunciation in order to know how to vary his delivery and diversify his movements appropriately...How is it that we see Actors who seem calm when they argue, angry when they exhort, indifferent when they show [feeling], and cold when they hurl abuse? That is what we commonly call not knowing or not feeling what one is saying—not having heart.[55]

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[54] Bernard Lamy, *La rhétorique, ou l'art de parler* (Paris: A. Pralard, 1688), 346-347.

[55] Jean-Léonor Le Gallois de Grimarest, *La vie de M. de Molière* (Paris: Liseux, 1877 [orig. 1705]), 223-224. Although Molière's plays were satirical, caricatured portraits of petty vanities in action, they were particularly celebrated for their *lack* of affectation. One critic praised the playwright's wife, Armande Béjart, and her veteran acting partner, La Grange, for the verisimilitude of their performances in *Le Malade imaginaire*: "They know how to touch the heart and paint the passions.

Dramatists drew a direct connection between the self-conscious movements of the hands and the face, on one hand, and the corresponding movements of the heart, on the other. For them, affectation wielded no persuasive power without genuine affect to inspire it. One of the century's leading playwrights, Georges de Scudéry, concluded that acting must be an immersive experience for the actor: "It is necessary, if possible, that [actors] metamorphose into the characters they play."[56] While it is unlikely that actors and orators always obeyed such prescriptions in practice, the idea behind them was taken seriously enough to become conventional, and we know that performance culture had a profound influence upon the way early modern Europeans actually moved, gestured, and spoke.[57]

Enemies of the stage testified to the power and pervasiveness of the "natural" technique when they denounced its sinful display of base emotions. Bishop Jacques-Benigne Bossuet, a court preacher best known today as the century's leading apologist for royal absolutism, inveighed against "what an actor does when he wants to play a passion naturally: as much as he can, he recalls the passions that he has felt and for which, as a Christian, he should have drowned in tears of penitence so that they might never return." Bossuet compared plays to "nudes and immodest paintings" which "naturally cause that which they express." But theater was even more dangerous, he argued, since it presented "not at all lifeless characteristics and

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Their portrayal is so believable and their acting so well hidden in naturalness [of character] that one is unable to distinguish between the truth and mere appearance." *Entretiens galans* (Paris: Ribou, 1681), t. II: 91-92. For more on the connections between rhetorical theory and Baroque drama, see John S. Powell, "Music and French Baroque Gesture," *Early Music Performer*, no. 30 (April 2012), URL: http://www.personal.utulsa.edu/~john-powell/JOHN%27S%20ARTICLES/Gesture%20Article%20in%20Early%20Music%20Performer.pdf (accessed 22 November 2015).

[56] Georges de Scudéry, *L'Apologie du Théâtre* (1639).

[57] Peter Burke, *The Art of Conversation* (New York: Wiley, 2013), 95-120; Adam Fox, *Oral and Literate Culture in England, 1500-1700* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2000).

colorless complexions...but living characters, real eyes...real tears in the actors, who cause real tears to flow in those who look at them."[58] The Jansenist theologian Pierre Nicole agreed that drama obliged the players "to excite [vicious passions] in themselves...to impress them upon their souls, in order to express them outwardly by gestures and words." "We must not imagine that one can wipe from his character this impression," he warned, "and that it does not leave behind in us a great inclination toward the same passion that one has wished to feel."[59] Those who described politics and society as a kind of theater shared Nicole's and Bossuet's assumptions about the acting process, if not their moral concern. Although his performances were calculated and ephemeral, the ideal public man, like the ideal actor, identified on an emotional level with the persona he projected to others, which is precisely what made that persona believable.

It made perfect sense to think of public life as a stage because contemporaries considered the "real" world to be a mere sideshow, or screen, to the more profound reality of an existence governed by God. To elites who understood this life to be transient and illusory, theatrical metaphors captured the deceptive shallowness of temporal affairs. The very elements of Baroque drama—masks and costumes, metamorphoses, mistaken identities, deceit, clothing switches, trompe l'oeil, double

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[58] Jacques-Benigne Bossuet, *Maximes sur la comédie* (1694), quoted in Paul Friedland, *Political Actors: Representative Bodies and Theatricality in the Age of the French Revolution* (2002), 17. For more on this theme, see Friedland, 17-21. Blaise Pascal likewise warned that among all the amusements dangerous to the Christian life, "there is none more to be feared than the theatre. It is a representation of the passions so natural and so delicate that it excites them and gives birth to them in our hearts." Blaise Pascal, *Pensées* (New York: Dutton, 1958 [orig. 1670]), 5.

[59] Pierre Nicole, "Traité de la comédie" (1667), in *Essais de morale* (Paris: Desprez, 1675), t. III: 274-275. Nicole's former pupil, the dramatist Jean Racine, naturally disagreed, insisting that "the passions are presented to the eye only to show all the disorder they cause." Jean Racine, preface to *Andromaque* (1667), quoted in Luiz Costa Lima, *The Dark Side of Reason: Fictionality and Power* (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 1992), 43. For the origins of their dispute over theater, see Nicole, *Les visionnaires* (Liège: Beyers, 1667), 14.

entendre, and plays-within-the-play—at once reflected and reinforced a widespread belief that the things of this world obscured the underlying "truth" of the next. According to churchmen and moralists, the knowledge that everything around him was simply appearance liberated the Christian from attachment to this life and helped him to move more effectively through it, just as the consciousness of the actor that he was acting allowed him to perform his role all the more convincingly.[60]

The New World is a Stage

The leading officers who served in North America were hardly untouched by these cultural currents. Nearly all of them had received a classical education, either in the *collèges* or elsewhere. Most of them were veterans of the court, knew its protocols, and had participated in its festivities. They generally obtained their appointments after long careers of administrative or military service in Europe.[61] In North America, where they and other observers frequently compared Native song and dance to balls, ballets, and opera, the appropriation of indigenous rhythms of movement as political spectacle would have seemed only natural.[62] The precise content of their reading is largely unknown, but Frontenac's library included copies of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* and Jean de Lartigue's *La politique des Conquérants* (see below), both of which stressed themes of transformation and disguise.[63] The *récits de*

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[60] Herdt, *Putting on Virtue*, 134-135. The classic formulation of these ideas can be found in Richard Alewyn, *Das große Weltheater: die Epoche der höfischen Feste* (Munich: Beck, 1985 ed.).

[61] Saint-Simon, who had a keener eye for men's failings than their virtues, nonetheless praised Frontenac as "a man of great wit" who lived "very much in society." Saint-Simon, *Mémoires*, t. VI: 169. On the backgrounds of the individual officers who served in New France, see their entries in the *Dictionary of Canadian Biography Online*, and the biographies cited elsewhere in this dissertation.

[62] See the examples cited in Havard, "Le rire des jésuites": 548-552.

[63] "Inventaire après décès du Marquis de Frontenac," (22 April 1699), in *Nouvelles Archives de l'Art français*, 3e série, vol. XV, *Revue de l'art français ancien et moderne* (Paris: Charavay, 1899), 225.

voyage, missionary epistles, and other printed exotica that circulated widely at court and in officialdom often represented the New World as a stage, to the point that one leading specialist has dubbed these works a "theater" whose literary conventions hewed closely to those of Baroque drama.[64]

From the earliest years of colonization, moreover, New France itself was both a site and a subject of theater. In 1606 the lawyer and poet Marc Lescarbot celebrated the safe return of Samuel de Champlain and Governor Jean de Poutrincourt to Port Royal, Acadia by staging a nautical masque, in which four costumed "savages," mimicking the pageantry of royal entry ceremonies, recognized the sovereignty of the French over their people.[65] Three decades later Governor Charles Huault de Montmagny brought the stage to Québec, where his secretary played the starring role in a "Tragi-comedy" whose demon characters spoke Algonquin (the better to "strike [the Natives'] eyes and their ears").[66] When Governor Pierre de Voyer d'Argenson

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The craze for Ovid in France reached its apex under Louis XIV, when the *Metamorphoses* inflected the work of numerous writers, painters, and dramatists. The interior paintings ordered by the king for the Marble Trianon at Versailles in 1688 drew heavily on motifs from the *Metamorphoses*; Molière admired the poem so much that he always kept a copy at hand in his bedroom at Auteuil; Racine, who planned to write a play based on Ovid's life, read and extensively annotated his collected works in 1661. L. P. Wilkinson, *Ovid Recalled* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 439. Frontenac was not the only colonial official to own a copy of the *Metamorphosis*, which appears among the 36 volumes of books listed in the inventory after death of Claude Bermen de la Martinière (1636-1719), judge, First Councillor of the Superior Council, and subdelegate of Intendant Michel Bégon. John A. Dickinson, "Un aperçu de la vie culturelle en Nouvelle-France: L'examen de trois bibliothèques privées," *Revue de l'université d'Ottawa*, vol. 44, no. 4 (octobre-décembre 1974): 458.

[64] Those conventions include their stage design ("*mises en scène*"), scripts ("*manuscrits d'acteurs*"), and unity of setting ("*unités de lieu*"). François Moureau, *Le théâtre des voyages: Une scénographie de l'Âge classique* (Paris: Presses de l'Université Paris-Sorbonne, 2005).

[65] Kathleen Lynch, "Staging New Worlds: Place and 'Le Theatre de Neptune,'" *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies*, vol. 38, no. 2 (Spring 2008): 315-344.

[66] Six years later the governor oversaw a production of Corneille's *Le Cid*. He and Corneille had been schoolmates. Jean-Claude Dubé, *The Chevalier de Montmagny (1601-1657)* (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 2005), 150, 215; Paul Le Jeune, *Jesuit Relations* (1640), 83-85; Jean Hamelin, "Charles Huault de Montmagny (c. 1583-1653)," in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography Online*. It was around this time that Montmagny himself became a character in Cyrano de Bergerac's *Voyage dans la Lune*, whose protagonist crash lands in Canada on his way to the moon. In the story, Montmagny and the protagonist have an extended debate over heliocentrism, before the governor takes leave to discuss the

arrived to assume his post in 1658, he visited the Jesuit seminary where a schoolboy, the future magistrate René-Louis Chartier de Lotbinière, improvised a play in the role of "the spirit of the forests, the interpreter for the strangers."[67] Governor Jacques-René de Brisay de Denonville (1685-1689) once joked that a box of "Eskimo clothing" he sent to the minister of Marine was "fit for a masquerade."[68] The syncretic thrust of these performances (and imagined performances) is a reminder that one of the chief aims of early modern theater was to translate seemingly universal human experiences across lines of cultural difference. By representing Europe to itself through a "savage mirror," colonial officers, like contemporary dramatists, questioned what it meant to be civilized, made the foreign familiar, and staked political claims to overseas spaces.[69]

In the seventeenth century, plays became a fixture of public life in Québec.[70] The colonists' enthusiasm for the stage prompted one wag to quip that "when the French settle somewhere, the first thing they do [is] build a theater."[71] "You will not refuse me a few pounds' spending money to help pass the time," one newly-arrived chevalier begged his brother in 1682, "above all at some of the finest plays, like

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Iroquois threat with his Native allies. Cyrano de Bergerac, *Voyage dans la Lune* (Paris: Flammarion, 1898 ed. [orig. 1648]), 47-64.

[67] André Vachon, "René-Louis Chartier de Lotbinière," in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*.

[68] Denonville to Pierre Arnoul, c. October 1685, BnF NAF 21430, f. 393.

[69] Michael Wintroub, *A Savage Mirror: Power, Identity, and Knowledge in Early Modern France* (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 2006); Henry S. Turner, *Early Modern Theatricality* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2013), 483-491; François Moreau, "American Aboriginals in the *Ballets de Cour* in Champlain's Time," in *Champlain: The Birth of French America*, eds. Raymond Litalien and and Denis Vaugeois (Montréal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press and Septentrion, 2004), 43-49; Enterline, *Shakespeare's Schoolroom*.

[70] Elaine Frances Nardocchio, *Theatre and Politics in Modern Québec* (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 1986), 3-5.

[71] Marcel Trudel, *Histoire de la Nouvelle-France*, t. II (Montréal: Fides, 1966), 62,

l'avar[*e*], *le malade imaginaire* and some *Crispains* [sic]."[72] Frontenac, whose family had once staged Garnier's *Bradamante* for the young Louis XIII, delighted in watching his own entourage play Corneille and Racine. In 1694, his plan to stage *Tartuffe*, which he had seen read at court by Molière himself, prompted the arrest of his lieutenant and leading man by order of the bishop of New France, who shared Bossuet's distrust of theater.[73] Few of these performances were as syncretic as Lescarbot's or Montmagny's—most, in fact, were thoroughly French—but they suggest that colonial officers were immersed in the dramatic arts of their day and keen to bring them to the New World.

The theatrical worldview that royal officials brought with them to New France underpinned conventional ideas about diplomacy. François de Callières—Louis XIV's private secretary, a seasoned diplomat, and brother of the governor of New France, Louis-Hector de Callières (1698-1703)—described the ideal ambassador as one who "resembles in a way the Actor, exposed upon the stage before the eyes of the Public to play great roles." Diplomatic ceremonies were "plays," he continued, in which ambassadors, as "kings of the theater," represented "the *personnage* of the king."[74] The ambassador Abraham Van Wicquefort agreed: "To succeed in this profession one must be a bit of an Actor...perhaps in all the commerce of the World, there is no figure more *Comique* than the Ambassador. There is no theater more

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[72] Louis-Henri de Baugy to Eugène de Baugy, 22 November 1682, reproduced in *Journal d'une expedition contre les Iroquois en 1687*, ed. Ernest Serrigny (Paris: Leroux, 1883), 156-157. Italics mine.

[73] Robert de Roquebrune, "Le théâtre au Canada en 1694. L'affaire du 'Tartuffe'," *Revue de l'histoire des colonies françaises*, vol. 19, no. 80 (1931): 181-194; Jean Héroard, *Journal de Jean Heroard sur l'enfance et la jeunesse de Louis XIII (1601-1628)*, t. II (Paris: Didot, 1868), 72-73.

[74] François de Callières, *De la manière de négocier avec les souverains* (1716), reproduced in *François de Callières: L'art de négocier sous Louis XIV*, ed. Jean-Claude Wacquet (Paris: Presse de l'École Normale Supérieure, 2005), 189, 189n4, 195.

illustrious than the Court, no drama in which the actors appear less than as they actually are."[75] Both cast the diplomat as a figure who passed seamlessly between personas. "As the most able actor is not always on stage & changes his manner of action after the curtain has fallen," observed Wicquefort, "so the Ambassador, who has played his role well in the functions of his character, must become [again] the gentleman, when he is no longer performing the drama."[76] According to Callières, "a negotiator...must know how to accommodate himself to [the humors and fancies] of others; may he be like Proteus...always ready to assume all sorts of figures according to the needs of the moment."[77]

The notion that diplomatic success hinged on the protean flair of ambassadors was shared by the rhetorician and royal historiographer Jean de Lartigue, whose *La politique des conquérants* numbered among the books Frontenac kept in his library. If the governor ever read it, he would have learned that diplomats "assume different faces and represent diverse personas" in the course of their negotiations. Their dexterity, Lartigue argued, was central to France's manifest destiny as a universal empire: "People of Letters & of War, men of the *Cabinet* and of the Campaign" who served the king as ambassadors would have to mobilize both "Learning and Eloquence" in order to "manipulate the Minds" of their opponents. In a metaphor

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[75] Abraham Van Wicquefort, *L'Ambassadeur et ses fonctions* (Cologne: Marteau, 1690), t. I: 5 and t. II: 3.

[76] Wicquefort, *L'Ambassadeur*, II: 3.

[77] Callières, *Manière de négocier*, 195. Callières studied the problem of manners across a variety of social contexts, publishing not only a treatise on diplomatic negotiation but also guides to artful conversation, fashionable words, storytelling, and good conduct. Callières, *Des bons mots et des bons contes: de leur usage, de la raillerie des anciens, de la raillerie et des railleurs de notre temps* (Paris: Barbin, 1692); *Des mots à la mode: du bon et du mauvais usage dans les manières de s'exprimer* (Paris: Barbin, 1692); *Des mots à la mode et des nouvelles façons de parler, avec des observations sur diverses manières d'agir et de s'exprimer* (Paris: Barbin, 1693); *De la science du monde, et des connoissances utiles à la conduite de la vie* (Paris: Ganeau, 1717).

that might have appealed to Frontenac's martial sensibilities, Lartigue characterized the negotiating table as a battlefield on which "one practices an Image of warfare, attacking and defending, seizing Towns, winning battles, [and] defeating one's enemies without an army, without spilling blood, by reason & dexterity alone...by this imperceptible Art that is the highest degree of *la Science Civile*." Without resorting to "guile," the ideal negotiator, using his "lively & prompt imagination," should "adjust his intrigues & his speeches to the diversity of...Temperament of those with whom he deals, to their differences of Climate, mores, institutions, and Governance."[78]

As these last lines suggest, the qualities of the successful diplomat could be deployed anywhere in the world. "He will consider the nature of the people & the Nation with whom he negotiates," Lartigue instructed, in terms similar to those of Wicquefort and Callières, "He will study their humor to accommodate himself to their inclinations." The precise manner in which an ambassador deployed his talents naturally depended upon where and with whom he found himself. It was by dispatching negotiators to far-off countries and leaving them latitude in the conduct of affairs, Lartigue claimed, that the French had learned to tailor their diplomacy to a variety of local cultures.[79]

Officers and observers understood that in the colonies, as in Europe, public men wore masks, and not only when negotiating with foreign powers. The Dominican chronicler Jean-Baptiste Du Tertre repeatedly referred to factional

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[78] Jean de Lartigue, *La politique des conquérants* (Paris: 1664 ed.), 123-126; "La seconde partie de la politique des conquérans, accommodée au gouvernement de la France et à l'estat présent des affaires," Bibliothèque nationale de France, Manuscrits français 4164.
[79] Lartigue, *La politique des conquérants*, 126.

conflicts in the Caribbean as occasions when the authorities abandoned pretense and "removed their masks." When Governor Poincy clashed with the Compagnie des Isles de l'Amérique, he did so because "the sole means to protect himself...was to lift his mask...by opposing them with all his power." Later he "removed his mask in favor of rebellion" by expelling company officials from Saint Christopher. When Governor Houel of Guadeloupe openly incited his followers to defy the Lieutenant-General of the Islands over a personal slight, he ceased "to act covertly & in secret, [and] removed his mask."[80] Like Lartigue, Du Tertre portrayed the strategic dissimulation of one's feelings and aims as a fact of political life.

If the Caribbean was a political arena in which governors sometimes veiled their true intentions, Canada was a veritable masquerade. In a country where "virtue does not triumph...only vice, scandal, and libel," royal officials had to be many things to many people in order to maintain the king's authority.[81] Shortly after arriving at Québec in 1665, the colony's first intendant, Jean Talon, reported that "a bit of Rhetoric" was required to lift the morale of colonists "beaten down" by decades of company misrule.[82] More than half a century later, Governor Charles de Beauharnois (1726-1749) drew on the collective experience of his predecessors to warn that governors faced the constant threat of manipulation by subjects who were "generally of a spirit inclined to flatter and praise even as they are thinking otherwise." In a handwritten "Modèle politique d'un gouverneur du Canada," he prescribed an array

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[80] Tertre, *Histoire*, t. I: 259, 290, 361.

[81] Beauharnois, "Modèle politique d'un gouverneur du Canada," Collection Famille de Beauharnois, Library and Archives Canada, MK18-MG 1: 8.

[82] "Mémoire du Roi pour servir d'instruction à Talon (27 Mars 1665) avec notes de Talon," *RAPQ* 1930-1931 (Québec: Rédempti Paradis, 1931), 17. Talon's annotations, made at Québec, are dated October 1665.

of "wise outward appearances" calculated to persuade the colony's restive inhabitants that their governor "[thinks] only of the public good and utility, and at the same time of the service of God and the establishment of peace and unity in the colony." Although he considered such unity impossible to achieve in any full or lasting way, Beauharnois nonetheless believed that a governor could manipulate his public image to maintain obedience to himself and the king.

Beauharnois detailed the variety of situations in which artifice would be necessary to forestall intrigue, defuse conflict, and uphold the crown's interests in a distant colony. A governor should be wary in the presence of missionaries, he warned, since they would slander him to their superiors in France even as they "dissemble [their grievances] in Canada." The Jesuits were particularly "dangerous enemies...writers able to ruin the reputation of those who deny them what they ask," so one must be prepared to "cover any refusal in the cloak of service to the king, as they know how to wrap themselves in that of religion." In private, all of the colony's religious orders could be appeased by "making it seem as if one inclines toward their side," while in public, the governor could win their favor by praising their superiors, "but with a dexterity and in a manner that none can sense any preference." The bishop of New France would cooperate so long as he received "on all occasions...fine hopes and praises." The laity was just as susceptible to flattery and deceit, Beauharnois observed, but since most were commoners, the successful governor would need to address them with calculated condescension. The Superior Council ("a court of injustice...comprised mostly of traders who were once petty clerks") could be controlled easily through a show of collusion and back-slapping *bonhomie*—what

Beauharnois called "their system...[of] claiming to be friends with each other, I will do for you as you do for me." Among the more humble colonists, "being affable" would suffice "to win their hearts."[83]

In a factious colony rife with sycophants and schemers, Beauharnois cast performance and deceit not only as facts of political life, but as everyday means of governance—necessary tools of the trade. One moment the governor might be a benevolent father-protector winning the hearts of humble colonists, the next he might be cultivating allies among his social inferiors on the Council, nodding disingenuously at the petty gripes of the priesthood, or misleading the bishop, with the appearance of utmost piety and good faith, that he would request royal funds for the hospital of Québec. In language akin to Lartigue's, Beauharnois emphasized the use of "dexterity" and "wise outward appearances" to create an array of personas suited to the political landscape of the colony. Unlike Lartigue, however, his rules were not the speculations of an armchair diplomat, nor were they written to please patrons or a public audience. They were instead occupational "observations," as he put it, informed by long experience and intended for use in the field.

It was in a world accustomed to thinking about performance and public life in these ways that French approaches to Native diplomacy made sense. For noblemen, honor and authority were achieved rhetorically, through the manipulation of signs that persuaded others of their status and power. Even violent forms of noble self-assertion such as executions, beatings, and judicial torture were heavily ritualized affairs

[83] Since the governor's public credit depended upon the appearance of propriety, disinterest, and self-mastery, Beauharnois added, he should keep any mistresses at a safe remove from government, "entertaining himself in secret"—although, "for his salvation, it would be better not to have one at all"). Beauharnois, "Modèle politique": 8-10.

intended to impose symbolic order upon the disordered reality of existence. If the self-conscious play of appearances was fundamental to the aristocratic experience in Europe, naturally, it was no less so in America. Masks of authority, diplomatic pretense, rhetorical training, dramatic arts, and the everyday histrionics of high society all formed part of a theatrical sensibility that permeated elite culture on both sides of the Atlantic. The conventional wisdom that life represented a series of "stages" on which noblemen displayed their virtues conditioned the way they moved through the world wherever they went. By temporarily adapting their verbal and physical deportment in ways that took them far from what was socially normative in France, officers in New France learned to embody a Native persona that their successors would inherit and adjust to meet the shifting demands of diplomacy.

Barbarians and Politicians

During the half century following the royal takeover of New France in 1663, the ceremonial contours of Franco-Native diplomacy remained largely unchanged. Encounters typically began in the woods a few miles away from an agreed-upon rendez-vous—sometimes Native settlements or outlying French forts, sometimes Québec or Montréal. French delegations included royal officers, missionaries, or traders who claimed to speak on behalf of the French as a whole. Native communities, which reached political decisions by consensus, sent headmen who usually represented only their own bands or factions. Once the emissaries had greeted each other, they proceeded to the rendez-vous site, where the visiting party was welcomed with volleys of musket fire. After a day or two of rest, negotiations began: the sides faced each other, expressed condolences for each other's dead or

sick, smoked a peace pipe (*calumet de paix*), and engaged in several days of speeches organized around the exchange wampum belts or collars (*colliers*), which later served as a common record of what had been discussed and concluded.[84] The *colliers* were threaded with seashells or porcelain beads whose color and pattern represented a specific request—to make war on a mutual enemy, for example, or to adjust the value of furs. Accepting a belt laid at one's feet signified that the proposal or grievance it contained would be considered; refusing a belt meant outright denial. Formal answers were not delivered until the following day or even several days afterward, during which time the parties socialized and engaged in trade. When negotiations were over, everyone exchanged gifts, danced, smoked, and feasted at the host's expense.[85]

The etiquette that governed all of these ceremonies was as baroque and subtle as any code of courtesy in Europe, and observing it demanded a similar degree of mental and physical discipline, but royal officials claimed with mounting conviction that Native diplomacy was about more than following protocol: it was above all a matter of passion. According to La Potherie, who based his history of the Iroquois Wars on firsthand experience as well as reports supplied to him by longtime negotiators, diplomatic ceremonies were a "Stage," and those who spoke, sang, and danced in their midst were "actors." He described Native councils and war feasts as moments of extraordinary emotional intensity during which orators' spirited words

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[84] As one Jesuit put it, the belts were exchanged "as contracts, and as public proofs, which are handed down to posterity, and attest what has been done in any matter." *Jesuit Relations* 33: 133, quoted in Blackburn, *Harvest of Souls*, 88. La Potherie explained that a *collier* was a "Spokesman, or a Contract, which has the same virtue as that which one makes before a Notary." La Potherie, *Histoire de l'Amérique*, t. III: "Termes et expressions des sauvages" (front matter).

[85] This résumé of diplomatic protocols between Natives and the French follows Havard, *The Great Peace of Montréal*, 21-25.

and contorted faces were "accompanied by very violent gestures and movements."[86] In a rhetorical environment where passions ran high, the French had to match their allies' emotional pitch with histrionic displays of their own: "One must have great political skill to manage these peoples," he observed, adding that they could be won over only through a face-to-face "eloquence" whose "great charms...touches the ears...animates the passions...fortifies the mind...excites the affections of the soul...[and] has a gift of persuasion when it insinuates itself pleasantly."[87] La Potherie stated his case with exceptional literary gusto, but his chosen metaphors and arguments permeated French administrative reportage and printed relations in the decades after 1663. By casting Native diplomacy as a stage, he and other officials not only glorified French negotiators as superior performers to whom the eyes of the world should be drawn, but also made their actions intelligible to readers as a rhetorical exercise with real political stakes.[88] In the New World, as in the Old, eloquence achieved emotional power, and emotional power was political power.

A rare visual artifact of a council held during this period captures the French view of Native diplomacy as a stage for the interplay of words, gestures, and feeling. The image (Figures 2 and 3), published in 1703 as part of the Baron de Lahontan's

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[86] La Potherie, *Histoire*, t. III: 198-199 ("*Scene*"), t. II: 116, t. 4: 199 ("*acteurs*").

[87] La Potherie, *Histoire*, , t. II: 115-117 ("gestures"), t. III: 198-199 ("*Scene*"), t. II: 116, t. 4: 199 ("*acteurs*"), t. II: 227 ("political skill"), t. IV: 83-84 ("eloquence"). "It is difficult to express the particulars of these kinds of Feasts unless one has seen them himself," La Potherie claimed, "I once found myself at a similar [war] banquet among the [Mission] Iroquois...& it seemed to me that I was in the midst of Hell." La Potherie, *Histoire*, t. II: 117. On La Potherie's sources, which included Jesuit missionaries and the former commandant at the Baie des Puants (Green Bay), Nicolas Perrot, see Nicolas Perrot, *Mémoire sur les moeurs, coustumes et religion des sauvages de l'Amérique Septentrionale* (Yorkshire, UK: S. R. Publishers, 1968 ed. [orig. c. 1715]), preface.

[88] In addition to its primary definition as the space in a theater where actors perform before the public, the word *scène* denoted a prominent or public office: "We say, figuratively, that *A man appears on the stage*, to mean that he is in a post, in a position that draws the eyes of the world to him." "Scène," in *Dictionnaire de l'Académie française* (1694).

account of his military service in North America, depicts talks between Governor Joseph-Antoine Lefebvre de La Barre (1682-1685) and the Onondaga headman Outreouti in September 1684. The governor, seated regally in a chair and flanked by two interpreters, faces Outreouti, who declaims proudly while holding a pipe. The members of their entourages are shown standing or sitting in stylized poses—their arms outstretched or akimbo, their hands pointing or supinated, their heads turned this way and that. Even in this still image, perpetual motion is encoded in their bodies, whose dramatic gestures would have implied both lively discussion and intense feeling: lively discussion because educated Frenchmen understood gesture to be fundamentally aligned with speech (*geste* being "the movements of the hand conforming to the things one says"), and intense feeling because words and gestures together formed the art of rhetorical delivery (which aimed "to persuade the mind & touch the heart of those who hear us").[89] The same thematic link between eloquence, movement, and emotion pervades Lahontan's generalized scenes of Native diplomacy (Figure 4), where indigenous figures engage in animated speeches, dances, and other rituals of war and peace. The pattern appears in other representations of the time, as well, notably the royal geographer Nicolas Le Fer's 1698 drawing and description of Illinois headmen welcoming French officers with the *calumet* (Figure 5). It is noticeably absent, on the other hand, from contemporary depictions of diplomacy in Europe, which tended to portray councils as serene, deliberative affairs held among seated negotiators (Figure 6).

[89] Pierre Richelet, *Dictionnaire français* (Geneva: Widerhold, 1680), t. I: 371 ("geste") and t. II: 224 ("prononciation"). Gesture "refers principally to movements that accompany speech." "Geste," in *Dictionnaire de l'Académie française* (1694). The meanings of gesture within Baroque performance-practice are explored more fully in Powell, "Music and Baroque Gesture."

It was natural for French observers to identify passion as the lifeblood of a diplomatic environment where the heart often served as a metaphor for the state of relations. Native headmen frequently proclaimed their allegiance to *Onontio* by asking him to "receive my heart" or to "make my heart one with your own." Those who felt they had an especially close bond with him, such as the Mission Iroquois, declared proudly that they "know better and more intimately than [others] the true sentiments of your heart."[90] Native ambassadors adopted the same language when relations broke down. The Onondaga headman Tegannisorens once complained to a French negotiator, "You come and speak of peace and have scarcely sat down to smoke a pipe, but talk of coming and knocking us on the head, and therefore I say nobody knows your heart."[91] French officials incorporated heart-talk into their own diplomatic lexicon, assuring Native emissaries that they would "reveal my heart to you," imploring them to reciprocate, and asking them to "be but one heart and one mind" with them. In the speech preceding his war dance in 1690, Frontenac announced to his allies that he "would explain to them his feelings with an open heart."[92]

To the French, emotional manipulation by a well-deployed Native persona seemed like the surest means to control hearts governed by a curious mix of reason and impulse. On the one hand, Amerindians appeared more than capable of reflective, complex, and strategic political behavior. "When we speak of the Iroquois

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[90] See, for example, the speeches delivered during the closing ceremony of the Great Peace of Montréal of 1701, in La Potherie, *Histoire*, t. IV: 240-252.

[91] Tegannisorens to Le Moyne de Maricourt, quoted in Havard, *Great Peace*, 204.

[92] La Potherie begrudgingly praised one Huron whose innuendos in council piqued the pride of his fellow headmen until he "wormed [the truth] out of them to uncover little by little the sentiments of their hearts." La Potherie, *Histoire*, t. IV: 23.

in France," La Potherie admonished his readers, "we imagine that they are Barbarians, always thirsting for human blood. Wrong...It is the proudest & most fearsome Nation in North America...the most political & judicious one could find." Intendant Antoine-Denis Raudot considered Natives to have "all the wit and *politique* necessary to pursue their interests." The Jesuit missionary Jean Bobé agreed: "these peoples...[are] very wise & refined Politicans, skilled, dissimulating, understanding their interests perfectly and knowing how to achieve their designs...the French & the English need all of their dexterity & their wits to deal with them." Lahontan, La Barre, Frontenac, and the former commandant of Baie des Puants (Green Bay), Nicolas Perrot, likewise stressed that Natives acted according to a keen perception of their own self-interest.[93]

On the other hand, Amerindians seemed prone to flights of feeling or fancy that overpowered their customary self-possession. They would "believe anything" when their imaginations were "heated up" by dreams or drink or rumor, and their minds were "dominated imperiously" by sentiments of ambition, vengeance, and vainglory that "possess their hearts entirely."[94] To royal officials, Natives seemed to lack the refinement necessary to impose reasonable restraint upon their emotions as fully as Europeans could do. Their self-regard was so consuming, Perrot claimed in a report to Intendant Michel Bégon de la Picardière around 1715, that "you would be

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[93] La Potherie, *Histoire*, t. III: 1; Antoine-Denis Raudot, *Relation par lettres de l'Amérique septentrionale (années 1709 et 1710)*, ed. Camille de Rochemonteix (Paris: Letouzey et Ané, 1904), 3, 66; Jean Bobé, "Lettre de M. Bobé, missionaire," in La Potherie, *Histoire*, t. IV: 270; Lahontan, *Nouveaux voyages*, t. II: 112; Perrot, *Mémoire*, 77-78; La Barre to Seignelay, 4 November 1683, ANOM COL C11A, vol. 6, ff. 134-144, reproduced in Dubé, *La Nouvelle-France sous Joseph-Antoine Le Fevre de la Barre*, 91; Frontenac to Pontchartrain, 30 April 1690, reproduced in *RAPQ* (1927-1928), 30.

[94] Perrot, *Mémoire*, 69; La Potherie, *Histoire*, t. III: 28.

shocked to see them arrange themselves, they don't know what pose to strike; I believe that if they had a mirror before their eyes, they would change their appearance every quarter of an hour." The key to negotiating with them, he argued, was to exercise the same protean quality in a strategic way, alternately bribing, flattering, chiding, and intimidating them in order to exploit the vicissitudes of their passions.[95]

To be sure, such reductive notions of the "Native mind" reflected longstanding assumptions about the impetuousness of "savage" peoples, but they also drew upon preconceived ideas about the emotional vulnerability of any public audience, even a European one. In a 1689 handbook for lawyers and preachers, the rhetorician Étienne Dubois de Bretteville voiced the wholly conventional belief that men are governed by feeling, not intellect: "the mind has long been the dupe of the heart...to win over a man's reason, it is necessary first to win over his passion." The problem for Bretteville and other educated observers was that the heart of man seemed like "an abyss whose shadows we have never penetrated...a sea whose bottom is impossible to find...a new world yet to be discovered."[96] Nonetheless, they were confident that close and sustained scrutiny of anyone's outward appearances would reveal his true feelings in the end. Although contemporaries debated the precise workings of the heart and its passions—were they mechanical or vital? soulful or material?—most believed that emotions operated according to regular patterns that

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[95] Perrot, *Mémoire sur les moeurs,* esp. 69, 76-78.

[96] Étienne Dubois de Bretteville, *L'éloquence de la chaire et du barreau* (Paris: D. Thierry, 1689), 315-317. When the French spoke of the "mind," or *esprit*, they could mean the rational faculties, but also the humors, dispositions, or capacity for imagination that likewise arose from the soul. See "Esprit," *Dictionnaire de l'Académie française*, 1st ed. (1694).

could be identified by physical and verbal clues.[97] "Since we read on a man's face what passes in his heart," Lamy observed, "the fire in his eyes, the lines of his forehead, [and] the changes of color in his face are obvious markers of the extraordinary movements of his soul. His particular turns of phrase [and] manner of expressing himself, so far from those one maintains in moments of calm, are signs...of the agitation that move his mind during the time when he speaks."[98] Bretteville agreed that one could "judge the springs of the machine by its display, & surmise what is hidden inside by what escapes from it...No matter how secretive the heart is, Passion will betray it & make it known."[99] Natives were no exception to this rule, and the ambition of the French to discover the "new world" of their hearts was entirely consistent with a political culture that privileged passion as the animating force in public life.

Unlike persuading parishioners or parlementaires in France, however, manipulating the Indians of North America meant learning to detect passions from an unfamiliar set of cues displayed by seemingly inscrutable and even treacherous peoples. La Potherie noted that Europeans "who do not know [the Natives]" often mistook their "brutal" manners for anger, while at other times, the Indians deliberately hid their "violent feelings" behind a stoic façade.[100] Raudot agreed that

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[97] Bretteville, *L'éloquence*, 317. On debates over the workings of the human heart and its passions, see Fay Bound Alberti, *Matters of the Heart: History, Memory and Emotion* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2010). On the early modern preoccupation with reading the passions from bodily clues, see "Strange Alteration: Physiology and Psychology from Galen to Rabelais," in *Reading the Early Modern Passions: Essays in the Cultural History of Emotion*, eds. Gail Kern Paster et al. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), 272-294.

[98] Lamy, *La rhétorique*, 108.

[99] Bretteville, *L'éloquence*, 317. For a similar view, see Marin Cureau de la Chambre, *Caractères des passions*, t. I: "L'art de connoistre les hommes" (Paris: 1648).

[100] La Potherie, *Histoire*, t. II: 256 ("brutal"), t. III: 28 ("violent feelings"). Mother Marie-Andrée Regnard Duplessis de Sainte-Hélène recalled witnessing one headman apologize to an intendant, "I

Natives often put a deceptively placid face on the rolling boil of their emotions. "They are very *politique* and very patient when insulted," he observed, "but they maintain their resentment and lose no opportunity to take revenge [later]."[101] Summing up decades of frustration among missionaries and royal officers, La Potherie lamented that "the Savage mind is difficult to know; he says one thing & thinks another."[102] Close observation was the only way to discover the Natives' true feelings, he concluded, and the charged atmosphere of diplomatic councils and war feasts provided some of the few occasions when their customary poise was absent: "The Savage is naturally phlegmatic, something is needed to excite him; only the hope of making war somewhere reveals at the same time the sentiments of his heart."[103]

As they adapted metropolitan preconceptions about persuasion and the passions to an unfamiliar audience of Native headmen, royal officials drew inspiration from the insights, experience, and patterns of performance bequeathed by their predecessors. The founding governor of New France, Samuel de Champlain (1608-1635), served as a touchstone model of strategic imitation and accommodation. Champlain's *Voyages* (another text owned by Frontenac) described how he had forged alliances with nearby bands by wintering with them and immersing himself in their ceremonies. In his speeches, Champlain repeatedly insisted that Native headmen were his "brothers," and that their children would one day intermarry with

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beg you, do not be offended that I speak so loudly. Nature has given me this tone, and I mean you no disrespect by it." Regnard Duplessis de Sainte-Hélène to Hecquet de La Cloche, 17 October 1723, LAC FR CHAN T, vol. 62, p. 6.

[101] Raudot, *Relation*, 66.

[102] La Potherie, *Histoire*, t. II: 262.

[103] La Potherie, *Histoire*, t. III: 246. This comment follows his description of a war feast.

the French to form one people. He used a mixture of bribes, threats, and stage-managed encounters to convince them to host Jesuit missionaries in their settlements.[104] His writings portrayed Indians as peoples whose customs, once understood, could be exploited to win their affection (and, in the long run, their conversion and refinement into civilized Christians). Although he was sometimes contemptuous of Native cultures, he nonetheless displayed a critical detachment from French proprieties in the face of indigenous ways of life.[105] Looking back nearly a century later, Perrot idealized the Champlain era as a period when "we began to make ourselves master of the savages, even though there were few French at that time." The key then, as at present, was to know their "nature" and traditions in order to "know how to manage them."[106]

The diplomatic practice of royal governors was fundamentally shaped by the career of Montmagny (1636-1648), as well. It was he, after all, who forged a rare peace with the Mohawks in 1645 that earned him the Iroquoian sobriquet *Onontio*, or "Great Mountain"—a title derived literally from his name (*mont* meaning "mountain," and *magny*, like *magnus*, meaning "great"). Not only was Montmagny

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[104] Samuel de Champlain, *Les voyages de la Nouvelle-France occidentale* (Paris: Collet, 1632); Alain Beaulieu, "The Birth of the Franco-American Alliance," in *Champlain*, 153-161. For stage-managed encounters, see Le Jeune, *Jesuit Relations* 6 (1633): 196-201. On Champlain as "brother" to his allies, see Le Jeune, *Jesuit Relations* 5 (1633): 249. On his (failed) vision of Christian intermarriage between Natives and the French, see Cook, "Onontio Gives Birth": 177-178.

[105] Although he dismissed their faith in the spiritual power of dreams, for example, Champlain once assured a party of Huron (Wendat) and Montagnais (Innu) warriors that he had dreamed of many Iroquois drowning in a lake. The warriors greeted his vision with "such belief, that they no longer doubted that what would happen to them [in battle] would turn out well," and their ensuing victory over the Iroquois at Ticonderoga helped to establish a lasting alliance. Champlain, *Voyages*, t. II: 148-149. The governor sometimes took an ironic view of his position between French and Native cultures. For instance, at the same table where he had histories and the lives of the saints read to him morning and night "like [in] a well-ordered Academy," he partook of bear meat offered to him by a Native convert, laughing to the Jesuits that "if they knew in France that we were eating Bears, they would turn their faces away from our breath, and yet you see how good and delicate the meat is." Le Jeune, *Jesuit Relations* 5 (1633): 210-211 (bear) and 6 (1634): 4 (academy).

[106] Nicolas Perrot, *Mémoire sur les moeurs*, 76-78, 96.

the namesake of a role that would outlive him for more than a century, he was also, in his own time, "wonderfully adroit in using...all the presents, all the feasts—in a word, all the help and all the benevolent acts which have to be done for these barbarians to get along in peace with them."[107] Those benevolent acts included spectacles such as the "Tragi-comedy" performed in 1637. They also encompassed an extensive fireworks show that featured dozens of rockets and "little serpents," four spinning wheels, a lighted cross, a cascade of sparks, and the name of Saint Joseph illuminated on an animal skin. When the governor ignited the display, his Jesuit interpreter explained that the French "were more powerful than Demons, that they commanded the fire, and that if they wished to burn the villages of their enemies, they could soon do it," prompting a delighted audience of Huron and Algonquin allies to emit a lusty "hô! hô! hô!"[108]

In staging such spectacles, Montmagny and his collaborators practiced familiar modes of persuasion within a Native idiom. They played up the aspects of their own material, religious, and political culture that would best "strike the eyes and the ears" of their listeners. Their performances were calculated to appeal to Native beliefs in the spiritual power of certain gestures and objects, combining public displays of mastery over "the fire" with feasts and gift-giving in order to inspire an admiration that could be read on their allies' faces or heard "from the depths of their stomachs." During one feast the governor reportedly "had the banquet opened by a [Algonquin] Captain, who observed their ceremonies, explaining who it was that had invited them, and of what the feast was composed; at every dish...they showed their

[107] Le Jeune, *Jesuit Relations* 14 (1637), 67-69.
[108] Le Jeune, *Jesuit Relations* 14 (1637), 183-185.

satisfaction by their hô, hô, hô."[109] At a procession celebrating the birth of Louis XIV, Montmagny's cannon "thundered forth, inspiring [the] poor Savages with a holy awe," the Ursuline nuns "sang the Exaudiat, to the delight of our Savages," and prayers were held "in the savage tongue."[110] In all of these ways, he collaborated with missionaries and Native go-betweens to make himself legible to his allies as a powerful warrior, a liberal host, and master of a seemingly endless supply of miraculous and useful goods.[111]

Royal officials worked within patterns established by their predecessors, but as Montmagny's own example attests, they learned how to embody a compelling Native persona primarily from those who actually lived on Native ground—namely, Jesuit missionaries. After establishing a permanent foothold in the colony in 1632, the "black robes" quickly became renowned as the colony's foremost experts in Native customs. Years of being shunned for having "no sense" taught them how to think and act like their Indian hosts. Initially dismissed as weak, ugly, effeminate, asocial, smelly, and awkward, they experimented with a variety of moods and miens to find a deportment that satisfied their would-be converts.[112] Close scrutiny of the Natives was crucial to the process. "A great step is gained when one has learned to know those with whom he has to deal," wrote Father Jerôme Lalemant in 1642, "[when he] has penetrated their thoughts; has adapted himself to their language, their customs, and their manner of living; and when necessary, has been a Barbarian with

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[109] Le Jeune, *Jesuit Relations* [14] (1637): 98-99.
[110] Le Jeune, *Jesuit Relations* 15 (1638): 9-11, 16-17.
[111] This interpretation draws on Allan Greer's analysis of Native ideas about Jesuit power. Greer, *Mohawk Saint*, 107.
[112] In this they followed the example of the Recollects who preceded them. Axtell, *The Invasion Within*, 71-90.

them in order to win them over to Jesus Christ." It was through just such an immersive approach, he later reported, that Jesuits living among the Wendat (Huron) had developed "a greater knowledge than ever before of their language, of their customs, and of the means that must be taken to enter into their minds and hearts."[113] For Lalement, identification produced knowledge, and knowledge made persuasion possible. Like his missionary counterparts in Europe and Asia, he considered the careful study and imitation of local peoples to be a prerequisite to their conversion.[114]

The Jesuits recognized that all of their efforts would be pointless if they could not make themselves understood by their hosts. From their first years in Canada, they set about learning and recording indigenous dialects, translating the catechism and the pater noster, and recruiting sympathetic headmen to expand upon and polish their own halting speeches.[115] After observing that Native orators obtained influence through their "tongue's end" and that they succeeded "not less by gesticulation than by language," the missionaries imitated their movements and inflections. "There is nowhere in the world where Rhetoric is more powerful than in Canada," claimed Father Paul Le Jeune, who marveled at the "keenness and delicacy" of Native speeches "that might have come out of the schools of Aristotle or Cicero."[116] According to Father Jean de Brébeuf, "[Amerindians] raise and bend their voices in the tone of old-time preachers, but slowly, steadily, distinctly, even repeating the

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[113] Lalemant, *Jesuit Relations* 23 (1642) and *Jesuit Relations* 28 (1645), quoted in Blackburn, *Harvest of Souls*, 85-86.
[114] For comparison, see the Jesuit practices of imitation and accommodation in seventeenth-century Asia. Chakravarti, "Many Faces"; Ronnie Po-chia Hsia, *A Jesuit in the Forbidden City: Matteo Ricci, 1552-1610* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2012).
[115] Jean de Brébeuf, Relation of 1635, reproduced in *Écrits en huronie*, ed. Gilles Thérien (Québec: Bibliothèque Québecoise, 1996), 169.
[116] Paul Le Jeune, *Jesuit Relations* 5 (1633), 203-204.

same reason several times."[117] If Native speechifying sounded Antique, however, the body language needed to animate it looked emphatically modern. Father Simon Le Moyne preached "in what was really the Italian style," which is to say a flamboyant manner. By "walking about and...proclaiming with pomp the word of God" in "a torrent of forcible words," he developed an oratorical presence pleasing enough to help conduct peace negotiations at Onondaga in 1654, where he "delivered my entire harangue, which I pronounced in the tone of a [Native] Captain—walking back and forth, as is their custom, like an actor on a stage."[118] The same principles of persuasion taught by Jesuit rhetoricians in France underpinned their missionary campaign in North America, since they believed that Natives could be moved like any other audience: by imitating their style, appealing to their needs and passions, and inciting them to action through a "charismatic momentum" of carefully calibrated words and gestures.[119]

By dint of their ministry, the Jesuits became the first Europeans to develop stable and studied Native personas. Much as later French governors inherited the title of *Onontio* from Montmagny, Jesuit superiors at Québec became known as *Achiendassé*, after the Huron sobriquet for Lalemant. Some individual missionaries such as Brébeuf (*Echon*) received indigenous names of their own. Investing their personas with recognizably "Native" attributes required an extensive project of self-refashioning. In a guide meant to instruct new recruits in how to live among the Wendat (Huron), Brébeuf drew on his own experience to stress the necessity of

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[117] Simon Le Moyne, *Jesuit Relations* 41 (1654); Brébeuf, Relation of 1635, in *Écrits*, 168.
[118] Le Moyne, *Jesuit Relations* 41 (1654): 111; Jean de Quens, 42 (1655-1656): 103-105. On the ascendance of a flamboyant style of delivery among Jesuits in Italy during this period, see Filippi, "Orator's Performance": 515-516.
[119] Blackburn, *Harvest of Souls*, 85; Morrissey, "Terms of Encounter."

transforming one's speech, dress, and deportment in radically unfamiliar ways. "This is a lesson easily learned but difficult to practice," he observed,

> since, coming from a polite place, you fall into the hands of barbarians, who care neither for your philosophy nor your theology. All of the fine things that could make you respected and admired in France are like pearls trampled at your feet by swine or, better yet, by mules who despise you to the last degree, seeing that you are not good pack animals like they are. If you can go nude and carry a horse's load on your back as they do, then you will be learned in their doctrine and recognized as a great man, otherwise not.

Among Natives, such recognition mattered a great deal: if a man was judged annoying or difficult in his first encounter with them, Brébeuf noted, "that is how they will think of [him] in their villages," and it would be virtually impossible to change their opinion. Hence the missionary must not cause delays, get in the way, ask too many questions, appear unhappy, or fail to eat the Indians' "dirty" and "flavorless" corn stew (*sagamité*). To avoid accidents while traveling by canoe, he should wear a nightcap instead of his usual wide-brimmed hat—mortifying, Brébeuf conceded, but "there is no impropriety among the savages."[120] In short, "as for the great number of...things which might displease [you], one must suffer them for the love of God without saying a word of it or letting it show." In all of these ways, Jesuits like Brébeuf trained their tongues, faces, and bodies to conform to Native norms. They assumed the trappings of a culture that was not their own, deploying "holy artifice" in heeding Christ's call to "be all things to all men in order to win all."[121]

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[120] Jean de Brébeuf, *Instruction pour les pères de notre Compagnie qui seront envoyés aux Hurons* (1637), in *Écrits en huronie*, 197-200.
[121] Axtell, *The Invasion Within*, 84.

The Jesuits set the standard of cross-cultural performance to administrators who observed and abetted their work, and their presence in Native communities made them crucial reservoirs of influence and expertise. They kept governors informed of the political mood in Native settlements and accompanied them on campaign to serve as interpreters and couriers.[122] Their rhetorical practices bled into those of royal officials, who initially followed the black robes' habit, inherited from Champlain, of referring to Natives as "brothers" united with the French in a powerful alliance under God the Father.[123] Missionaries also laid the groundwork for negotiations between officers and headmen. "Trust in them," La Barre instructed one lieutenant destined for Illinois Country in 1683, for "they are the most knowledgeable people in the manner of dealing with the savages."[124]

Embodying Onontio

In a diplomatic arena where performance was paramount, royal officials studied what missionaries and governors had done, but they did not—indeed could not—follow past precedent to the letter. In the years immediately following the crown's takeover of the colony, the needs of the French and their allies changed rapidly, as shifting political and demographic circumstances redefined the terms, relationships, and geography of their alliance. Between 1663 and 1673, the French

[122] See Governor Denonville's marching orders from the campaign of 1687, reproduced in Baugy, *Journal*, 199, 204. For an example of missionaries keeping governors informed of news from Native settlements, see the letters sent to Frontenac following his negotiations at Cataracoui in 1673. "Letters of Some Canadian Missionaries to Monsieur the Count de Frontenac," in *Jesuit Relations* 56 (1672-1673): 19-31.

[123] A "lineage in the sky," as one Iroquoian-language pamphlet put it in 1670. *De Religione* (c. 1670), quoted in Cook, "Onontio Gives Birth": 177.

[124] "Coppie des Instructions données par monsr le Gnal au sr de la Durantayes pour le voyage qu'il va faire aux Outaouax et Meamis (21 April 1683)," in Baugy, *Journal*, 165-167.

population of New France ballooned nearly four-fold, from around 2500 to over 8000, just as epidemic disease and the continuing pressure of the Iroquois Wars were devastating their Native allies and driving them westward.[125] Demobilized French soldiers and officers, meanwhile, began to establish trading posts along the Great Lakes and down the Mississippi River. As Peter Cook has shown, the fraternal metaphor that had structured diplomacy since the time of Champlain was replaced at this time by a paternal one. All parties adopted a ritual vocabulary that reflected the new balance of power between them. The French, who understood fathers to hold coercive authority over their sons much as a king commands his subjects, eagerly embraced a patriarchal role that seemed to promise a similar dominion over their willful Indian allies; their allies, for whom fatherhood implied protection and generosity but not political mastery, hoped to receive greater relief as French "children" than as "brothers"; Iroquois headmen, momentarily war-weary, accepted that *Onontio* was the father of his allies in order to make better terms with him, or even became his children themselves, knowing that it obliged far less deference, in their own terms, than if they were his "nephews."[126]

Although the term "father" carried different meanings for all sides, it represented a flexible metaphor through which they could rebuild relations as

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[125] Historians continue to debate the extent to which northeastern Native communities were weakened and dislocated by warfare in the middle decades of the seventeenth century. Here I follow the prevailing account that many of the Native communities that moved into the Great Lakes region after c. 1650 were composed of "refugees" fleeing disease and the pressures of the Iroquois Wars, but others, such as Heidi Bohaker, have used oral histories to suggest that these migrations westward were in fact "planned" by Natives and "embedded" in their culture. In this telling, the embrace of *Onontio*-as-father presumably would have resulted from Native strategies conceived from a position of strength rather than one of weakness and desperation. Heidi Bohaker, "Nindoodemag: The Significance of Algonquian Kinship Networks in the Eastern Great Lakes Region," *The William and Mary Quarterly*, Third Series, vol. 63, no. 1 (January 2006): 23-52.

[126] Cook, "Onontio Gives Birth."

warfare, disease, and dislocation transformed the political landscape around them, and the near universal acceptance of it allowed French administrators to invest the role of *Onontio* with a newfound coherence. It is no accident that this coherence coincided with Frontenac's lengthy tenures as governor (1672-1682, 1689-1698). From his earliest days in the colony, Frontenac represented himself as a father to his enemies as well as his allies. In his first speech to the Five Nations, delivered near present-day Kingston, Ontario in July 1673, Frontenac "addressed them as children, and thereby bound himself to act towards them as a father...the other *Onontios* not having made use of that mark of authority, and [the Iroquois] having never consented to be addressed otherwise than as Brothers."[127] His secretary claimed that the governor's gifts and speeches were well received by his listeners, "whose countenances were much changed by them."[128] The reality was undoubtedly more complex: the Iroquois accepted the presents Frontenac gave them as their self-appointed "father," but at least some of them surely contested that they were his dependent "children."[129] Whatever the case, over the course of his career the governor's speeches, paperwork, and letters to court consistently portrayed *Onontio* as a father to his Native allies, just as many of their headmen professed to be his children, and together they established a firm new precedent for all concerned.

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[127] Charles de Monseignat, "A detailed account of M. de Frontenac's voyage to Lake Ontario...in June, July and August, 1673," reproduced and translated in E. B. O'Callaghan, *Documents Concerning the Colonial History of the State of New York*, vol. IX (Albany, NY: Weed, Parsons, and Co., 1855), 109.

[128] Monseignat, "Voyage to Lake Ontario," in O'Callaghan, *Documents*, vol. IX: 104.

[129] Cook, "Onontio Gives Birth": 191-192. Less than a decade later, when Governor La Barre met with Iroquois emissaries at La Famine, their spokesman, the Onondaga headman Outreouti (or *La Grande Gueule*), affirmed the governor's place as father to his Native allies but contrasted their dependent status with Iroquois autonomy. "We are born free, we do not depend upon *Onnontio*," he announced dismissively, "if your Allies are your slaves or your children, treat them as slaves or as children." Louis-Armand de Lom d'Arce, Baron de Lahontan, *Nouveaux voyages dans l'Amérique septentrionale* (La Haye: L'Honoré, 1703), t. I: 53.

That portrayal was destined for a long life not only because a confluence of impersonal forces encouraged Native headmen to embrace it, but also because individual headmen and governors committed to the role. In tearing down the hagiographic portrait of Frontenac painted by Francis Parkman and other early historians, modern scholars have stressed the governor's ignorance of what was "really going on" in his encounters with Indians, demoting him from a Great White Man who "mastered the savages" to an unwitting pawn in Native schemes or, at best, a ready beneficiary of circumstances beyond his control.[130] Their revision is truer than the original image: Frontenac indeed exaggerated his influence over his allies, took advantage of sweeping demographic and political shifts in their communities, and failed to grasp the subtleties of their customs and conflicts in ways that cost the lives of people on all sides. Yet even in debunking his supposed mastery of Native diplomacy, his critics acknowledge something important about him as a person—and, by implication, about the culture from which he came. Writing about the governor's negotiations with the English, his modern biographer observed, with grudging admiration, that "no one knew better than he how to invest such proceedings with a sense of drama, smacking of the Court of Versailles, or perhaps of the theatre."[131] Another historian has called him a "narcissist" who nonetheless "knew how to inhabit

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[130] For early hagiographies of Frontenac, see Francis Parkman, *Count Frontenac and New France under Louis XIV* (Boston: 1877); Henri Lorin, *Le comte de Frontenac* (Paris: 1895); Charles Colby, *The Fighting Governor* [cite]. The principal revisionist account is William J. Eccles's *Frontenac—The Courtier Governor* (Toronto: McLelland and Stewart, 1965). More recently, Michael Witgen has emphasized Frontenac's misunderstanding of Anishinaabe politics and diplomacy, and Peter Cook has stressed that the governor and his successors benefited from the willingness of their Native allies and enemies to call *Onontio* "father" for strategic reasons of their own. Witgen, *Infinity of Nations*, 250-260; Cook, "Onontio Gives Birth": 191-192.

[131] Eccles, *Frontenac*, 233.

the persona of Onontio."[132] Instead of diminishing or pathologizing the governor's "sense of drama," however, we should take it seriously as an expression of his aristocratic worldview; without sidestepping the interpretive obstacles posed by the reductive and self-serving reports written by him and his successors, we can ask how those reports both reflected and reinforced emerging administrative ideas about the governance of Native passions.

It seems clear, after all, that Frontenac himself took his performances quite seriously. When he received orders to "Frenchify" the Huron in 1673, he promised to spend his first winter in Canada learning Iroquoian. While there is no evidence to suggest that he followed through on his pledge, he recognized that a command of the language would enable him to acquire the sort of rhetorical prestige held by the Jesuits.[133] In the absence of Native language skills of his own, he micromanaged his interpreters, insisting that they translate his speeches word for word, as he had written them down, "that you may not lose any of my remarks," and even in his original French their contents obeyed the conventions of Native oratory (I will have more to say about these speeches later).[134] He further immersed himself in indigenous culture by "adopting" eight Iroquois children given to him as peace hostages.[135] The gesture amounted to a serious and novel sacrifice for the Five Nations, who risked precious

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[132] Witgen, *Infinity of Nations*, 251.

[133] "I will work...this winter to learn a bit of their language," he wrote Minister of Marine Jean-Baptiste Colbert, "and if I can see it through, I hope that I will be a good missionary, and that I will contribute as much as anyone to Frenchifying them [*les franciser*]." Frontenac to Colbert, 13 November 1673, reproduced in *Rapport de l'archiviste de la Province de Québec pour* (1926-1927), 44.

[134] Monseignat, "Voyage to Lake Ontario," in O'Callaghan, *Documents*, vol. IX: 104.

[135] The Iroquois "gave me that which they have always refused to [previous] governors," he reported proudly to Colbert, "and which M[onsieurs] de Tracy and de Courcelles could not obtain from them, [even] after having defeated them and burned their villages." Frontenac to Colbert, 14 November 1674, reproduced in *RAPQ* (1926-1927), 65-66.

kin in what was likely a bid to secure French military support.[136] But it also represented a real accommodation for the governor, who took in the children and raised two of them in his own household at a time when adoption was viewed with deep suspicion and rarely practiced by the nobility in France.[137]

Frontenac played up the magnificence and condescension of *Onontio* in ways that would have been utterly familiar to his predecessors. In order to make a lasting impression upon Native delegations, he engaged in extravagant feasting and gift-giving. He doled out pensions, medals, and other specific tokens of regard and affection to individual headmen whose own rhetorical prowess, he believed, would amplify *Onontio*'s voice among their people. His speeches mentioned his favorites by name, extolled their virtues, and flattered their families.[138] He arranged war games, cannonades, guided tours of Québec, and other spectacles intended to win the confidence and respect of allies and enemies alike.[139] Fusing the manner of an absolute monarch and an alliance chief, he demonstrated favor through an economy of access to his person: he permitted some Natives to weep at his knees or eat at his table, "caressing" and "speaking to them...rather like a Father meeting with his

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[136] Eccles, *Frontenac*, 56.

[137] Kristin E. Gager, *Blood Ties and Fictive Ties: Adoption and Family Life in Early Modern France* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2014), 20-36.

[138] Instances of Frontenac's hospitality toward Native emissaries are too numerous to cite here with any completeness, but can be found throughout his correspondence as well as the third and fourth volumes of La Potherie's history. Some examples of his speeches, as well as discussions with missionaries and other officials about the impact of his oratory, gift-giving, and tokens of personal regard, can be found in Frontenac to Duchesneau, 5 August 1682, in O'Callaghan, *Documents*, vol. IX: 175; Lamberville to Frontenac, 9 September 1673, in *Jesuit Relations* LVII: 29; "Memoire au Roy en réponse de sa depesche du dixiesme avril dernier," 13 November 1684, ANOM COL C11A, vol. 6, ff. 340-354, reproduced in Dubé, *La Nouvelle-France*, 256; "Conference between Count de Frontenac and a Deputy of the Five Nations," in O'Callaghan, *Documents*, 183-189; Major de La Forest to Frontenac, 16 Sptember 1682, in ibid, 189; Lamberville to Frontenac, 20 September 1682, in *Jesuit Relations* 62 (1682): 149-151; La Potherie, *Histoire*, t. III: 104-109, 144-145, t. IV: 91; Frontenac to Pontchartrain, 30 April 1690, in *RAPQ* (1927-1928), 30-31.

[139] La Potherie, *Histoire*, t. II: 320, t. III: 137-138, 218-219.

family, to whom he reveals the feelings of his heart," while banishing others from his presence or ignoring them with a studied coldness.[140] He shifted quickly and consciously between emotional registers. When the Onondaga requested a truce with him to mourn the dead killed by a joint French-Odawa war party in 1697, for example, he haughtily threw the belt back in the face of their emissary, promising that "since the Iroquois were weeping over so trifling a blow, he would soon give them another reason for crying, and would again make them feel the weight of his Tomahawk." He then turned to several Odawa onlookers, gently pointing out to them that he could have made peace but, as their "faithful father," would never do so without including them.[141]

To the French, spectacular displays, elaborate ceremonies, and histrionic modes of oratory and gift-giving all represented somewhat familiar and acceptable means of persuasion, yet the pressures of continuous warfare encouraged them to adopt more transgressive ways of winning Native hearts, as well. Slavery was illegal in metropolitan France, but French governors did not scruple to strengthen their alliance by doling out Iroquois prisoners as slaves, sacrifices, or adoptive children; in the course of ritually "covering" their allies' dead, they eventually made *Onontio* the region's largest distributor of captives.[142] Scalping and torture, too, became important tools of French diplomacy. Frontenac once gifted fifty Iroquois scalps to the Odawa, and while Champlain and Montmagny had condemned torture, interceded

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[140] See, for example, his conduct among the Iroquois in 1673. Monseignat, "Voyage to Lake Ontario."
[141] La Potherie, "An account of the most remarkable Occurences in Canada" (1697), reproduced in O'Callaghan, *Documents*, vol. IX: 685.
[142] Rushforth, *Bonds of Alliance*.

to save or ransom the lives of prisoners, and adamantly refused to be present when their allies carried it out, later governors had no such qualms.[143]

Vengeful, ritualized, and elaborate public torture was hardly unknown in early modern Europe, but its Native American counterpart struck Europeans as un-Christian and barbaric, and it was not until the intensification of the Iroquois Wars in the final quarter of the seventeenth century that French officials embraced it as an integral part of *Onontio*'s persona. Frontenac willingly rendered enemy captives to his allies when he thought doing so would shore up his influence. He frequently ordered Iroquois prisoners to be burned, to the point that he once found himself in the ironic position of imploring his Mission Iroquois allies to torture an Onondaga captive who, like themselves, had converted to Catholicism. (They refused, and after French troops had tormented the prisoner for over an hour, intervened to kill him mercifully with a swift blow to the head.)[144] The executions gave force to the governor's threats to "roast" or "commit to the kettle" those children who disobeyed him.[145] It was in light of such gruesome accommodation that the English accused him of "not acting according to the manners of Europeans," which, in a sense, is precisely what he intended to do.[146]

The same policy filtered down to the governor's subordinates along the Great Lakes. Around 1690, for instance, the commandant of Michilimackinac, Louis de La

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[143] La Potherie, *Histoire*, t. III: 162.

[144] Adam Stueck, "A Place Under Heaven: Amerindian Torture and Colonial Violence in New France, 1609-1729" (PhD dissertation: Marquette University, 2012), 193-199. On the distinctions drawn by the French between European and Amerindian practices of torture, see Micah True, *Masters and Students: Jesuit Mission Ethnography in Seventeenth-Century New France* (Montréal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2015), 83-112.

[145] Antoine Laumeth de Lamothe Cadillac, "Memorandum of the Negotiations in Canada with the Iroquois" (1694), in O'Callaghan, *Documents*, vol. X: 578.

[146] La Potherie, *Histoire*, t. IV: 11-12.

Porte de Louvigny, solicited the torture of an Iroquois warrior who had sought refuge with the Huron. Louvigny hoped to sabotage ongoing negotiations between the Huron and the Five Nations that excluded the French, so he invited his Odawa allies, who opposed a peace, to help him "*drink the broth of this iroquois*" ("to conform to their manner of speaking," as La Potherie noted). Once the captive was bound, a Frenchman began rolling a red-hot gun barrel over the exposed skin of his feet. Soon joined by an Odawa, they took turns "grilling [the captive] one after the other up to the hollows of his knees." After two more hours of punishment, a crowd of Odawa women and children scalped, stoned, and dismembered him as the French looked on.[147]

Royal officials justified their adoption of indigenous forms of violence not by claiming that Natives were any less deserving of Christian mercy than Europeans, but rather by identifying torture and slavery as indispensable elements of *Onontio*'s image—key manifestations of his Indianness. How could *Onontio* fail to reciprocate ways of killing and "eating" his children that clearly held enormous significance for Natives? Were reprisals not anticipated by his allies, feared by his enemies, and often committed against the French themselves? If administrators felt obliged to mimic the "very violent gestures and movements" they witnessed in council—dancing, singing, promising bloodshed, raising the tomahawk—they felt no less strongly that ritual violence was a necessary and persuasive diplomatic language. La Potherie insisted that "the French character is the enemy of inhumanity," yet he also believed that officers in Canada "cannot dispense with making a public example" of their

[147] La Potherie, *Histoire*, t. II: 298-299.

captives in the ways expected of an alliance chief.[148] "One must come to these extremes because otherwise [the Natives] would become convinced that we will be soft on them," he explained, after describing another incident in which Frontenac's lieutenant and future successor, the Chevalier de Vaudreuil, burned alive a party of Iroquois trapped in a house.[149] To pass for great warriors in America, the French should take a relative view toward the rules of engagement: "what would be barbarity among us, may pass for virtue in an Iroquois."[150] Concerned that his readers might condemn torture and slavery as cruel, La Potherie voiced a widespread conviction among officials that strategic barbarism was necessary to build solidarity with their allies and maintain belief in *Onontio*'s power.

What Frontenac and his successors developed in the course of dispensing gifts, hosting feasts, delivering speeches, cultivating headmen, organizing spectacles, and publicly torturing and trading captives was not a perfect or stable control over their allies, but rather a repertoire of gestures and expressions they believed necessary to achieve it. Their primary aim was to incite friendly Natives to wage war against a fearsome and numerous Iroquois-English coalition. The campaign was constant, intense, violent, and expensive, and in the minds of French officials, it elevated Native diplomacy—and by extension the display of Indianness—to an affair of state worthy of tremendous effort and attention. Toward the end of the century, the extension of that campaign into the American interior would place new demands on

[148] La Potherie, *Histoire*, t. II: 297-298.
[149] La Potherie, *Histoire*, t. III: 135.
[150] La Potherie, "An account of the most remarkable Occurences in Canada from the departure of the Vessels in 1695, to the beginning of 9ber 1696," in O'Callaghan, *Documents*, vol. X: 654.

royal practices of patronage and reportage and enlarge the stage on which French officials performed pre-eminence over Native peoples.

Onontio*'s Agents*

As royal officials defined the suite of practices through which *Onontio* should make himself legible as a generous ally and a terrible enemy, the range of agents who deployed knowledge and influence on his behalf broadened as well. In addition to cultivating Native spokesmen, French governors received assistance from a growing number of men and women in the Iroquois missions. The Mission Iroquois used their kinship ties to the Five Nations to gather and interpret intelligence for the Jesuits, who in turn forwarded their reports to administrators.[151] When Governor Denonville's army found a plank bearing symbols "in the [Iroquois] manner," for instance, its meaning was interpreted by "our savages...without whom I do not believe we could have surmised what it was."[152] Native women, too, served the alliance in a variety of ways, not only as passive gifts and bargaining chips, but also as active informants, zealous converts to Catholicism, and living sources of diplomatic memory who wove the wampum belts that structured and recorded the course of negotiations. Their marriages to European men, whether sacramental or "in the manner of the country," multiplied the crown's eyes and ears on the ground by further embedding the French in Native settlements and kinship networks.[153]

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[151] The Iroquois "have many relatives in this mission [de Sault Sainte-Marie], by whom we are informed of all the news [in Iroquoia]," La Barre reported. La Barre to Seignelay, 12 November 1682, ANOM COL C11A, vol. 6, ff. 59-65, reproduced in Dubé, *La Nouvelle-France*, 63.
[152] Baugy, *Journal*, 111-112.
[153] On intermarriage between Native women and European men and its consequences for the politics of the *pays d'en haut*, see Susan Sleeper-Smith, *Indian Women and French Men: Rethinking Cultural*

As French traders and missionaries penetrated further into the American interior, the question of how its Native inhabitants should be folded into the alliance, and by whom, became a source of tension among officials who disagreed about the broader commercial, strategic, and religious aims of their diplomacy. Governor Denonville, who advocated rentrenchment and moved to abandon the colony's western posts, insisted that controlling and converting Indians close at hand was the colony's best hope of survival—a policy that necessarily gave the Jesuits the lead in negotiations. "These Indian tribes can never govern themselves except by those Missionaries, who alone are able to maintain them in our interest and to prevent their revolting against us," he informed the minister. "I am convinced by observation, that the Jesuits are the most capable of controlling the minds of all the Indian tribes, for leaving out of consideration their tact, they alone are masters of the different [Native] languages by reason of a very long experience acquired among them."[154] By contrast, Frontenac and La Barre supported expansion and argued that lay interpreters were more likely than the Jesuits to act in the king's interests, to communicate "what is proper for [Natives] to hear and also to know, exactly, their answers and sentiments."[155] Both governors had close, profitable ties to local merchants who claimed that access to western furs would enrich the colony at the expense of the English, and they invited a large group of traders to join in their deliberations on

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Encounter in the Western Great Lakes (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2001); on Native women weaving wampum belts, see La Potherie, *Histoire*, t. IV: 239; on women as bargaining chips and gifts, see La Potherie, *Histoire*, t. II: 325, 327-328.

[154] Denonville to Seignelay, January 1690, extracted in O'Callaghan, *Documents*, vol. X: 440.

[155] Frontenac to Colbert, 14 November 1674, reproduced in O'Callaghan, *Documents*, vol. X: 121.

Indian affairs.[156] Although they still relied on missionaries as key informants and go-betweens, their emphasis on trade over conversion as the binding force of the alliance gave lay subordinates a greater voice in the crown's diplomacy than ever before.

Historians typically explain the ascent of lay negotiators as a function of powerful political and economic interests in the colony, but as Frontenac's remark suggests, there were performative reasons to favor them as well. Unlike missionaries, their conjugal and commercial integration into Native societies was unimpeded by nettlesome vows of celibacy, poverty, or papal obedience. As superior fighters, canoemen, sexual partners, and suppliers of useful goods, soldiers and traders could more readily make themselves seen as "true men."[157] The greater immersive potential of laymen could be threatening if taken too far, as in the case of the "libertine" *coureurs de bois*, but it also seemed increasingly precious to officials who looked to monopolize trade and diplomacy with the Great Lakes peoples. "To make [those nations] our friends," Duchesneau informed the minister, "the best means...would be, in the opinion of those who have been frequently among those Indians, to send among them every two years some intelligent Frenchmen who possess the tact, which some have, to arrange whatever unfortunate events might take place." Such events included "unforeseen murders" and "the deaths of the most considerable [people] of their tribes," which the French should be prepared, he wrote, "to bewail after [the Natives'] fashion." He added that whoever France sent must

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[156] "Procès-verbal de l'assemblée convoquée par le Gouverneur La Barre pour discuter du péril Iroquois," 10 October 1682, ANOM, COL C11A, vol. 6, ff. 68-70, reproduced in Dubé, *Nouvelle-France*, 48-49.

[157] Sleeper-Smith, *Indian Women and French Men*. Natives typically reserved this designation for themselves. Europeans, not being "men," were known by the nation from which they came—"the French," "the English," and so on. La Potherie, *Histoire*, t. II: 327-328.

also know how and when to bribe the right headmen—"to gain over in an undeground way, as they term it, or underhand, as we say, those who have the management of their affairs," which he estimated could cost upwards of 1500 pounds per year.[158] The intendant proposed no candidates, but in practice administrators increasingly turned to officer-traders to manage the expensive, vicious, and often violent dealings necessary to their diplomacy.

As a result, royal networks of patronage grew to include laymen who placed their own indigenized personas in *Onontio*'s service. Perrot, whose trade in guns for furs earned him the Algonquian nickname *Metaminens* ("Iron Legs"), acted as *Onontio*'s envoy to the Great Lakes peoples, and his success was rewarded with a position as commandant of the region around Baie des Puants in 1685.[159] Similarly, the Montréal trader and militiaman Charles Le Moyne (*Akouessan*, or "Partridge") served as an interpreter and negotiator among the Iroquois from 1671 onward, for which he received extensive land grants, letters of nobility, and the position of attorney-general of the colony.[160] Both Perrot and Le Moyne were former Jesuit servants who had mastered Native languages before entering trade. They numbered among the colonists "known & respected by our savage Allies" who were frequently

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[158] "M. Du Chesneau's Memoir on the Western Indians," 13 September 1681, in O'Callaghan, *Documents*, vol. X: 165. On the annual cost of gift-giving in the *pays d'en haut* in this period, see "Memoire de la depance faite par le sieur de la Durantaye aux Outaouacs...1683-1684," 20 April 1685 [processed by Champigny 4 November 1693], ANOM COL C11A, vol. 6, ff. 451-452, reproduced in Dubé, *La Nouvelle-France*, 279-281. By 1700, the crown would budget 6,000 pounds per year for gift-giving, which Governor Callières and Intendant Champigny considered inadequate to the task of maintaining peace. Champigny and Callières to Pontchartrain, 18 October 1700, ANOM COL C11A, vol. 18, f. 7.

[159] "Nicolas Perrot," *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*.

[160] La Barre asked the king to reward Le Moyne's services "in all the occasions that arise daily on the subject of the Iroquois." La Barre to Seignelay, 4 November 1683, ANOM COL C11A, vol. 6, ff. 134-144, reproduced in Dubé, *La Nouvelle-France*, 97. For Le Moyne's role in negotiations, see Lahontan, *Nouveaux voyages*, 46-55; "Charles Le Moyne," *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*.

dispatched on far-flung diplomatic missions, which, according to administrators, could only be carried out by those who "know the manners of the savages" and "hold the upper hand over the minds of all these peoples."[161]

What officials in Québec and Montréal sought in these years were loyal clients who had the know-how necessary to improvise within Native cultures on their own initiative and at a moment's notice; in paperwork and printed accounts alike, they portrayed such men as masterful performers whose indigenized oratory curbed the chronic fickleness and factionalism of their allies. An episode from the career of Commandant Antoine Laumet de Lamothe Cadillac provides a case in point. In the midst of a council held at Michilimackinac in 1694, the Huron headman Le Baron recounted a vision that seemed to call for peace with the Five Nations and the English. Threatened by the implications for France's diplomacy, Lamothe Cadillac immediately intervened to counter him. According to La Potherie, "The Commandant...invented a parable in order to accommodate himself to the character of these people":

> Speaking to [the Sable Odawa headman] Grosse-Tete, he said, Have you seen the Moon in your Lake [Michigan], when the weather is calm and fair, [and the moon] appears to be in the water, although nothing is truer than that it is in the sky? You are old now, but know that if you returned to your youth & took it into your head each year to fish for the Moon in your lake, [and] you succeeded, your net would better ensnare it than your mind would ever be able to grasp what you are thinking on now. You exhaust yourself pointlessly [trying to understand European affairs]. Be assured that the French and the English cannot find themselves in the same land without killing each other. These are

[161] Lahontan, *Nouveaux voyages*, 90; Vaudreuil, "Memoire de M. le Marquis de Vaudreuil a Monseigneur le comte de Pontchartrain," 1710, ANOM, C11A, Vol. 31, ff. 67-70v; La Potherie, *Histoire*, t. III: 186.

> things decided beyond the great lake [i.e., the Atlantic Ocean].

Grosse-Tete responded simply, "How strange!" But in La Potherie's telling the parable effectively reasserted French command of the negotiations. That Lamothe Cadillac could read the situation and concoct a fable tailored to the "character" of his audience was hardly surprising, the chronicler asserted, since "he is from a country [Gascony] where witty on-the-spot rejoinders are never lacking."[162]

For the French, the notion that their pre-eminence derived from a culturally ingrained ability to manipulate Native words and passions was substantiated not only by momentary strokes of wit such as Lamothe Cadillac's parable, but also by the decades-long careers of backwoods diplomats like Perrot. In recommending Perrot to the minister, Frontenac praised him as someone who "has acquired much credit among the Western nations, by the long practice and knowledge he has of their humor, manners, and languages."[163] Others touted him as a model of how to "manage the minds" of France's allies.[164] La Potherie, who based his history primarily on reports supplied to him by the Jesuits and Perrot himself, reverently described how *Metaminens* had engaged in all "the rodomontades that one must affect with [the Indians]" in order to "make himself feared": defeating their shamans in spiritual combat, fabricating dreams that prophesied their deliverance or destruction, and convincing them that he controlled fire and the weather. Perrot, for his part, claimed that his conduct had inspired "a great deal of confidence...and I was loved by

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[162] La Potherie, *Histoire*, t. IV: 27-28.
[163] Frontenac to Seignelay, 20 November 1690, ANOM COL C11A, reproduced in *RAPQ* (1927-1928), 44.
[164] In addition to La Potherie's praise, see Bobé, "Lettre," in La Potherie, *Histoire*, t. IV: 268-269.

them."[165] In deploying his Native persona to build and maintain alliances far from the centers of French settlement, he seemed to embody precisely the sort of labile "tact" and "intelligence" that pro-expansion officials were eager to exploit.

Like the Jesuits who trained him, Perrot shed European standards of dignity, comfort, and behavior in order to manufacture charisma on indigenous terms. He suffered with good humor the ritual welcome of the Iowas, who smeared his head and shoulders with their tears and saliva and snot, served him raw and bloody bison tongue, and hugged him from behind in the midst of their dances, "making him move along with them in [their] manner." When the Fox seemingly mixed metaphors by asking him, as their "father," to let them "drink...milk suckled from [his bosom]," he cleverly thrust forward his tobacco pipe, "telling them that it was his breast that he had always offered in order to feed them." To recover a crate of merchandise taken by the Dakota, he threatened to "burn and dry up all their swamps," and to prove he could do it he dumped a cup of brandy on the council fire, creating a blaze so fierce that they quickly replaced the goods. He alternately praised the bravery of his allies and excoriated their cowardice in order to "reduce them to their duty." And he repeatedly persuaded Native emissaries to make the long and dangerous trek to Montréal and Québec, where governors invoked him in their speeches, knowing that their authority along the Great Lakes depended in part on a close identification with his own.[166] In narrating his exploits, Perrot and his contemporaries depicted him not

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[165] Perrot, *Mémoire*, 119-122 (harangues and "confidence"); La Potherie, *Histoire*, t. II: 254 ("rodomontades"), 94-98 and 263-269 ("sorcerers"), 155-156 (dream-prophecy), 331 (Perrot using Natives' lunar calendar), 87-89 (Perrot as god). La Potherie, *Histoire*, t. II: 87, 89-90.

[166] Perrot, *Mémoire*; La Potherie, *Histoire*, t. II: 183-186 (Iowas), 186-187 (Fox), 218-219 (brandy), 227 ("duty"). For an example of governors invoking him in their speeches, see the speech preceding

only as a protean ambassador, but also as something of an alliance chief in his own right—an *Onontio* of the west who wielded authority by mediating conflicts, distributing gifts, fighting bravely, commanding the elements, and delivering a series of improvised speeches that showcased his "Native" virtues.

Perrot's self-proclaimed successes invited the French to see the strategic performance of Indianness as an expression of their *grandeur*. Like Frontenac, he seemed to showcase the political fruits that a well-deployed Native persona could bear. From both men's careers, observers drew a lesson: since Perrot and Frontenac could enact Indianness without risking their essential civility, they could teach the French how to know and govern a "savage" empire. "No man will ever understand better than [Frontenac] the temper of the Indians who fear and love him," Lamothe Cadillac declared in 1694.[167] Frontenac and Perrot became the twin heroes of La Potherie's narrative primarily because each of them demonstrated "the secret of making himself commendable among these Peoples."[168] It was for this reason that Bobé recommended La Potherie's history as a guide to the "measures necessary" to preserve New France. By reading La Potherie's account, he suggested, future officers could learn to pattern themselves after those whose indigenized personas had insinuated a familiar brand of order into Native politics.[169]

This political lesson was reinforced most dramatically by incidents where the French represented different Native communities to each other as actual Natives

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Frontenac's war dance in 1690. La Potherie, *Histoire*, t. III: 96-98. On Perrot's reputation among colonial officials, see "Perrot," *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*.

[167] Lamothe Cadillac, "Memorandum of the Negotiations in Canada with the Iroquois" (1694), in O'Callaghan, *Documents*, vol. X: 584.

[168] La Potherie, *Histoire*, t. III: 252-253 ("secret").

[169] Bobé, "Lettre," in La Potherie, *Histoire*, t. IV: 269-271.

looked on. When three Seneca headmen initiated peace talks with Frontenac in 1695, they selected a French officer and former captive, Louis-Thomas Chabert de Joncaire, to speak for them. "We have adopted your Son, Joncaire, whom we have named *Sonnonchiez*," he explained to Frontenac on their behalf, "We wish him to make peace for us, since he once took part in [your] public affairs." Joncaire then delivered their gifts and speeches. When he had finished, a Jesuit, Father Millet, presented a belt from the Mission Iroquois calling on the governor to accept the Senecas' request.[170] Thus a council held between France and multiple Native communities was conducted entirely between Frenchmen. In attempting to explain it, La Potherie concluded that Joncaire had "insinuated himself into [the Senecas'] mind so well, that they saw him as their most faithful friend, & like a man who had become naturalized among them. They had so much confidence in him that they placed their own interests in his hands."[171]

The ability of French officers to speak credibly on behalf of Natives was critical, observers claimed, to the negotiations that produced New France's grandest diplomatic achievement: the Great Peace of Montréal of 1701, which brought together more than a thousand members of some forty nations to mark the end of the Iroquois Wars. Most Native communities sent headmen as representatives, but the Senecas and Onondagas both chose adoptive French "sons" to speak for them—Joncaire for the Senecas, and Paul Le Moine de Maricourt (*Taouestaouis*), son of Charles Le Moine, for the Onondagas. Joncaire and Maricourt led their delegations from Iroquoia to Montréal, met with Callières on their behalf, and conspired with the

[170] La Potherie, *Histoire*, t. III: 249-250.
[171] La Potherie, *Histoire*, t. III: 249.

governor behind the scenes to ensure the smooth progress of the talks. The two officers' freedom to pass between French and Indian roles according to the needs of the moment allowed them to game the negotiations according to Callières's orders. When the Iroquois arrived without the scores of Native captives they had solemnly pledged to bring with them, for instance, Joncaire, at the governor's urging, explained to France's outraged allies that the fault was entirely Maricourt's and his own, then pleaded with the Iroquois to rescue their "sons" from this "embarrassing predicament" by sending for their prisoners (which the Iroquois magnanimously agreed to do). The mutual fiction allowed all sides to sidestep a potential snag and proceed with the peace.[172] For the Senecas and Onondagas, appointing French sons as ambassadors likely represented a strategic choice to "hide in plain view" behind a European façade, with the expectation that they would receive better terms for it.[173] But to the French it showed that some Europeans could indeed know and represent Natives well enough to make actual Native voices superfluous.[174]

In staging the Great Peace, royal officers blended oratorical, musical, and balletic conventions meant to convey symbolically the patriarchal harmony *Onontio* had finally achieved with his "savage children." Callières, who had served under three different governors over nearly two decades, delivered a closing address infused with the indigenized imagery honed by his predecessors. In a large pavilion built especially for the occasion and adorned with the *colliers* of each nation present, he

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[172] Preliminary negotiations between Callières and Iroquois deputies, 18 July and 3 September 1700, ANOM, Colonies, C11A, vol. 18, ff. 81-88v; "Ratification de la paix faitte au mois de septembre dernier, entre la Colonie de Canada, les sauvages ses alliés, et les Iroquois..." (August and September 1701), ANOM, COL C11A, vol. 19, ff. 41-44; La Potherie, *Histoire*, t. IV: 136-140, 148-158, 216-218.
[173] On "hiding in plain view," see Susan Sleeper-Smith, *Indian Women and French Men*, 9, 116.
[174] Pierre-François-Xavier de Charlevoix, *Histoire et description générale de la Nouvelle France* (Paris: Giffart, 1744), t. III: 414-416; La Potherie, *Histoire*, t. IV: 217-218, 229-236.

announced, "Having brought [you] together in my hands, I can make you live together in peace...In admonishing you to treat each other as Brothers, I take up anew all your tomahawks and instruments of war [and] bury them with my own in a pit so deep that no one can retrieve them to break the tranquility that I restore among my Children." Having positioned himself rhetorically as a peacemaker to whom all parties owed filial obedience, the governor further asserted his pre-eminence by inviting the Iroquois and allied headmen, Intendant Champigny, and subordinate French officers "to smoke from this peace pipe, which I will do first."[175] Once every orator had spoken and smoked, the governor arranged a performance designed "to confirm this great Alliance with something sensational": as soldiers distributed cuts of beef, three Frenchmen emerged from the audience to dance the calumet, singing and "stepping in rhythm, their faces animated, moving their bodies to match the vehemence of their words," which were punctuated by coordinated volleys of cannon, explosives, and musket fire.[176]

Performance and Paperwork

Amidst the noise of greetings, harangues, musket volleys, cannonades, drumbeats, *sassagouez*, and howls of pain or triumph, it is easy to forget that for French officials, the course of Franco-Native diplomacy was marked from beginning to end by the scratch of pens on paper. The written word defined their understanding and performance of Indianness. Indeed, it provided the essential medium through which they imagined what it meant to be Native, immersed themselves in a suitable

[175] "Ratification de la paix," August and September 1701, ANOM, COL C11A, vol. 19, ff. 41-42.
[176] La Potherie, *Histoire*, t. IV: 240-253.

persona, and interpreted the experience for others. In periodic flurries of written instructions, transcriptions, dispatches, administrative reports, and printed relations, royal administrators recorded and interpreted their face-to-face encounters with Indians. The process required them to make sense of Native languages, gestures, and customs—to discover, as they put it, the "Native mind." During the five decades after 1663, their work became increasingly sophisticated, as the growing stakes and frequency of councils occasioned ever more ambitious levels of documentation on both sides of the Atlantic. To account for their own conduct and to help the minister and the king formulate Native policy, royal officials produced a vast body of written knowledge about "savage" peoples and the means necessary to govern them.

As the *Onontio* persona took root, the oral culture of diplomacy bled into the written culture of administration. Like the Jesuits, royal officials knew the importance of adhering to Native conventions of oratory, such as listening without interrupting, recapitulating what previous speakers had said, reciting the names and achievements of individual headmen, attaching meaning to specific wampum belts, and employing the correct metaphors and kinship terms. But keeping it all straight was virtually impossible without memory aids. The Jesuits had long addressed Native councils from written lists, which allowed them to recognize each headman present by his nation, band, and family, and to keep track of their own talking points.[177] Governors, fearing that they or their interpreters might misrepresent

[177] See, for example, Simon Le Moyne, Relation 41 (1654), in Thwaites, ed., *Jesuit Relations*, 108. "I astonished them greatly when they heard me name them all by Nations, bands, and families, and each person individually who was of some little consequence—all by the help of my written list, which was to them a thing full of both charm and novelty."

Onontio to his "children," followed suit. In the process, they infused their own practices of speechwriting and reportage with the linguistic customs of their audience.

Governors took a direct hand in writing *Onontio*'s speeches. Frontenac recorded his instructions to subordinates as complete orations written out in the Native style. When he first addressed the Five Nations in 1673, he read from a piece of paper, which he then handed to his interpreter, Le Moine, "so that he may explain it to you, word for word...that you may not lose any of my remarks."[178] Although he had probably consulted Le Moine beforehand about the content of the speech, he did not trust his interpreter to freely translate French expressions into Native ones. Rather, in "terms adapted to their manner of speaking," the governor crafted a French-language address flavored with indigenized metaphors, repetitions, and locutions that Le Moine could render directly into Iroquoian:

> Children! Onnontagues, Mohawks, Oneidas, Cayugas, and Senecas. I am pleased to see you...I have had a fire lighted for you to smoke by, and for me to talk to you. O, it is well done, My Children, to have followed the orders and commands of your Father. Take courage, then, my children; you will hear his word, which is full of tenderness and peace...My spirit is full of Peace, and she walks in company with me. Courage, then, My Children, and rest yourselves...[179]

Frontenac may never have learned Iroquoian, but he did speak a Native language: the "style at Council," composed of "hyperboles, similes, and other figurative expressions." Some French observers found its locutions "elaborate" and "tiresome," but Frontenac professed pride in matching an "eloquence, address, and finesse" he

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[178] Monseignat, "Frontenac's voyage to Lake Ontario," reproduced in O'Callaghan, *Documents*, vol. IX: 104. The same practice of reading from pre-recorded speeches would be observed later, too, during the Great Peace of Montreal of 1701, by Governor Callières, Perrot, and several Jesuit interpreters who all spoke from copies of the same text. La Potherie, *Histoire*, t. IV: 241.

[179] Monseignat, "Voyage to Lake Ontario," in O'Callaghan, *Documents*, vol. 9: 103-104.

compared favorably to "the manners of the Venetian Senate."[180] His lieutenants and successors, Callières and Vaudreuil, would adopt similar speech patterns, and like Frontenac they would write their orations in an indigenized idiom that allowed their interpreters to translate the contents word for word.[181]

French officials were immersed enough in the task of writing speeches to develop strong opinions about which phrases elicited the strongest emotional reaction from Native audiences. Terms of kinship were crucial, of course: Frontenac made it a point of emphasis to address all Indians as his children and to be addressed in turn as their father, and his successors scrupulously maintained the paternal front.[182] But filial forms of address comprised only a small portion of texts that abounded in vivid metaphors and rhetorical flourishes. After transcribing Callières's fulsome speeches to the Iroquois in October 1700, La Potherie explained the importance of the governor's seemingly overwrought expressions to Pontchartrain:

> "Bury the hatchet," "make a river pass over it," "weep for the dead," "strengthen the tree of peace"...none of that deeply touches those who love only metaphors [i.e., Natives]. But "may the straps and all the instruments of war be buried with this hatchet," "may the earth be leveled over it," "may all the rivers become beautiful and clean," "may the blood of the dead on both sides go to the bottom of the water and the earth," "may the branches and leaves of this tree of peace provide a shade so thick that those who place themselves beneath it are

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[180] La Potherie, "An account of the most remarkable Occurences in Canada from the month of September 1694 to the sailing of the vessels in 1695," in O'Callaghan, *Documents*, vol. IX: 605 ("tiresome"), 608 ("figurative expressions"). "You would surely be surprised to see the eloquence, dexterity, and finesse with which all of their deputies spoke to me," he reported to Colbert with typical grandiosity, "and if I did not fear seeming ridiculous to you, I would tell you that they reminded me, in a way, of the manners of the Venetian Senate, although their furs and blankets are quite different from the robes worn by the senators of Saint Mark." Frontenac to Colbert, 13 November 1673, reproduced in *RAPQ* (1926-1927), 62.

[181] At the celebration of the Great Peace, Callières passed copies of his concluding address out to his interpreters, to be read out verbatim. La Potherie, *Histoire*, t. IV: 240.

[182] Frontenac to Colbert, 14 November 1674, reproduced in *RAPQ* (1926-1927), 65.

> not only cooled but also sheltered from all the storms that may threaten them"; that "Onontio has built the Council Hut, laid the mat, and lighted the fire of peace to warm all these children who will be united with their Father with whom they will make one body and smoke together peacefully"...when all this has been stated in the sight of so many chiefs, there is no doubt that every one of them will be profoundly touched by it.[183]

Such evocative language was essential to pass as *Onontio*. Animated by physical cues and delivered "in the sight" of Native headmen, La Potherie suggested, it aimed primarily to excite an emotional response (submission, shame, fear, grief, affection, joy, or belligerence, in most cases). If the point of speeches was to move them to action, then speechwriting was largely a matter of deciding which rhetorical elements would most "profoundly touch" their hearts.

The act of composing speeches, like the act of delivering them, required French governors to inhabit the Native personas they wished to project. In choosing *Ontonio*'s words, they reflected on his relationship to his audience, imposed order on the world around him, and imagined what he should say to his "children." Their speeches, supplemented by gestures and gifts, were carefully selected to invest *Onontio* with personality, and calibrated to express familiar desires and emotions in an alien tongue. What governors engaged in is not self-writing, as historians and anthropologists generally understand that term, since it was hardly constitutive of a modern sense of interiority, or a "true self."[184] But it did construct, through specific

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[183] La Potherie to Pontchartrain, 16 October 1700, reproduced in Joseph-Edmond Roy, "Claude-Charles Le Roy de La Potherie," in *Proceedings and Transactions of the Royal Society of Canada*, series II, vol. 3 (Ottawa: Durie & Son, 1897): 19.

[184] Isabelle Luciani, "Ordering Words, Ordering the Self: Keeping a *Livre de Raison* in Early Modern Provence, Sixteenth through Eighteenth Centuries," *French Historical Studies*, vol. 38, no. 4 (October 2015): 529-548; François-Joseph Ruggiu, "Une voix à soi? Autour du diaire de Michel Chartier de Lotbinière," in *Ecriture, récit, trouble(s) de soi: Perspectives historiques, France, XVIe-XX3 siècle*, ed.

discursive practices, an individual whose thoughts, feelings, and expressions were conditioned by the expectations of his performers and his listeners.[185] As a cognitive exercise, then, it closely resembled the process of rhetorical learning, in which *collégiens* studied the words of Ancient orators, practiced their written and spoken conventions, and then devised original speeches intended to persuade an imagined audience of Greeks and Romans.

The exercise of writing out speeches in the Native style compelled governors to pass back and forth between European and indigenized personas. They left traces of their movements in the documents themselves. Sometimes they ventriloquized the voice of the court, invoking the "*grand Onontio*" of France, or using orders from Versailles as "a guide as to the policy we shall have to observe in our speeches...[and] in what manner we shall prepare them, that is to say, with more or less mildness."[186] At other times they switched pronouns or momentarily stepped out of character. When Frontenac dispatched Perrot to prevent the Odawa from making a separate peace with the English and the Five Nations in 1690, the governor wrote him a full address to be read out verbatim, in the first-person voice of *Onontio*, but for Perrot's eyes only he also included an instructive title, "Speech that must be delivered to the Odawa to dissuade them from making the alliance that they wish to make with the Iroquois and the English."[187] La Barre's instructions to one lieutenant slipped

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Isabelle Luciani and Valérie Piétri (Aix-en-Provence: Presses Universitaires de Provence, 2012), 159-185.

[185] Michel Foucault, *Dits et écrits* (Paris: Gallimard, 1994), t. IV: 415-430, 783-813.

[186] "Conference on the Intelligence received from the Iroquois," 23 March 1682, reproduced in O'Callaghan, *Documents*, vol. 9: 173; "Resume of speeches between 6 Iroquois deputies and Callieres," 18 July 1700, ANOM COL C11A, vol. 18, ff. 81v.

[187] Frontenac, "Parole qui doit être dite à l'Outaouais pour le dissuader de l'alliance qu'il veut faire avec l'Iroquois et l'Anglais," ANOM COL C11A, vol. 11, ff. 130-133.

repeatedly between third-person references to *Onontio* and first-person references to La Barre-as-governor and La Barre-as-*Onontio*:

> [La Durantaye] will confer with the...Jesuits and will determine with them in what way he can oblige the *Kiskakons* to come find me...it being necessary that they come see their new Father to discuss with him things which concern their security...[tell them] that I can conclude nothing definite until they come to find me and explain to me their interests which are dear to me like those of my children. [La Durantaye] will make the same known to the *Tionnontatez* [Petuns] and *Meamis* and will incite them to come trade at Montréal and bring many pelts, assuring them that the ways are safe...The most important thing I advise [La Durantaye] to do is to make the savages come in the greatest number they possibly can in order to see their new Father who greatly desires to see them.[188]

La Durantaye would have been able to adapt La Barre's instructions into a speech on *Onontio*'s behalf, which is clearly what La Barre had intended; but first he would have had to sort out which La Barre was speaking when, and to whom.

As they read out *Onontio*'s words, subordinate French officers not only passed between European and Native personas, but even from one indigenized role to another. Speaking in his absence, they claimed to act as neutral conduits for the unvarnished expression of his words and feelings—to temporarily embody him instead of their own Native "selves." Lamothe Cadillac, concluding an address to the Huron on Frontenac's behalf in 1694, insisted that his "word" came directly from *Onontio*: "There is my word, it is the spirit of *Onontio*, it is his voice, listen to it well."[189] Several years later a commandant at Detroit announced to his Odawa,

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[188] "Coppie des instructions," reproduced in Baugy, *Journal*, 163-164.

[189] La Potherie, "An account of the most remarkable Occurences in Canada from the month of September 1694 to the sailing of the vessels in 1695," reproduced in O'Callaghan, *Documents*, vol. 9: 604-605.

Pottawatomi, Huron, and Mississauga listeners, "It is your father Onontio who convokes you, and who is about to speak to you through my mouth. All that you are about to hear comes from him alone. I only repeat here what he orders me to say to you." He then raised the tomahawk above his head and addressed each nation directly, switching to the first-person voice as he did so.[190] In the same fashion, Perrot prepared a speech to the Anishinaabe that explicitly acknowledged *Onontio*'s authorship of the words before transitioning into the first person: "Listen, my children, our Father *Onontio* says; listen, he says; I regret to hear talk every year of the carnage committed in your lands..."[191]

For French officials, the elaborate effort to encode themselves as Indian entailed a parallel process of decoding indigenous words and customs; like students of classical rhetoric, they studied Native oratory closely in order to grasp its meanings and master its conventions. That process began with the transcription of speeches by French scribes, which allowed governors to reference past talks faithfully wherever they went.[192] The mobile diplomatic archives they maintained were passed down from one administration to the next. When La Barre arrived in 1683, he scrutinized the speeches and reports that Frontenac had left behind for him. Frontenac, in turn, examined the speeches exchanged between Denonville and the Iroquois when he

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[190] La Potherie, "An account of the most remarkable Occurences in Canada from the month of September 1694 to the sailing of the vessels in 1695," reproduced in O'Callaghan, *Documents*, vol. 9: 704-705.

[191] Perrot, *Mémoire sur les moeurs*, 153-154.

[192] "*Acossen*, tell [the Iroquois]...what passed yesterday, which I caused to be written down in your presence, so that nothing may be altered," Frontenac ordered Le Moine on the second day of talks with the Iroquois in September 1682. "Conference between Count de Frontenac and a Deputy from the Five Nations," 12 September 1682, rep. and trans. in O'Callaghan, *Documents*, 185.

returned to the colony in 1689.[193] Texts of speeches seem to have circulated widely among officers on the ground, who also kept written notes about their encounters that they used to prepare memoranda about Native oratory and customs.[194] It was by collecting a vast number of these records from officials and missionaries that La Potherie was able to produce his history, which could more accurately be described as a compendium of diplomatic speeches dating back to the 1660s.

The decoding process continued with conferences between governors and their advisors following the moment of encounter itself. When La Barre met with Outreouti at La Famine in 1684, for instance, he understood nothing of what the headman said to him until Le Moine and the Jesuits, having retired to the governor's tent, explained that Outreouti had been defiant and insolent (at which point La Barre flew into a rage).[195] Once governors had grasped the meaning of Native speeches for themselves, they drew up reports for the minister, to whom they also sent copies of all of the orations, arranged side by side and listed according to their corresponding wampum belts (see below). The interpretive process ended with a parsing of the transcripts by clerks of the ministry, who prepared annotated summaries of the speeches. By that point, the king and his minister had a body of paperwork telling

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[193] La Barre, "Procès-verbal de l'assemblée convoquée par le Gouverneur La Barre pour discuter du péril Iroquois," 10 October 1682, ANOM COL C11A, vol. 6, ff. 68-70, reproduced in Dubé, La Nouvelle-France sous Joseph-Antoine Le Febvre de La Barre, 48-49. La Barre's instructions to La Durantaye in 1683 noted that original copies of La Durantaye's commission and instructions remained in the hands of La Barre's secretary, Regnault, who had written them out for the governor. "Commission donnée par Monsr le gnal au sr de la Durantayes pour aller a Missilimakina" and "Coppie des Instructions données par monsr le Gnal au sr de la Durantayes pour le voyage qu'il va faire aux Outaouax et Meamis," in Baugy, *Journal*, 168. Frontenac alluded to the speeches delivered to Denonville in his correspondence with Pontchartrain. Frontenac to Pontchartrain, 10 May 1691, reproduced in *RAPQ* (1927-1928), 62.

[194] Perrot used his working notes to prepare extensive memoranda for Vaudreuil and Intendant Bégon; Louvigny did the same for Antoine-Denis Raudot; Baugy likewise took notes to inform his letters to family in France. See Perrot, *Mémoire sur les moeurs*; Raudot, *Relation*; Baugy, *Journal*.

[195] Baugy, *Journal*, 55.

them who said what to whom, what it all meant, and what their subordinates thought they should do about it.

In transcribing speeches and sending them back to court, royal officials extended a well-established tradition of diplomatic reportage to New France, but their work involved an added level of cultural and linguistic interpretation.[196] After all, there had been little exposure to Native words at court before 1665, and the surviving evidence suggests that the king and his ministers did not initially grasp their significance. When Intendant Talon sent back a treaty concluded that year with several Iroquois "Ambassadors," Louis and Minister of Foreign Affairs Hugues de Lionne were amused and delighted by the appended "Explanation" of eleven gifts presented to *Onontio* (Figure 7), which summarized the speeches attached to each one while preserving the Iroquois's unfamiliar locutions and metaphors. "I will keep it as a very curious and well-done piece," Lionne assured Talon. "The King heard it read out to him with great pleasure."[197] The translations could be understood well enough to serve as a curiosity, and they were indeed preserved as evidence of French claims to sovereignty over the Iroquois, but they were not treated as working documents of state that required extensive parsing in the manner of European diplomatic records.

That changed in the ensuing decades in part because the perceived stakes, cost, and intensity of the Iroquois Wars rose dramatically, but also because French governors claimed to derive much meaning from the words of Indian headmen. They positioned themselves as interpreters of Native speeches, sprinkling their dispatches

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[196] On European practices of diplomatic reportage and archiving, see Filippo de Vivo, "Archives of Speech: Recording Diplomatic Negotiation in Late Medieval and Early Modern Italy," *European Historical Quarterly*, vol. 46 (July 2016): 519-544.

[197] Lionne to Talon, 7 January 1667, reproduced in *RAPQ* (1930-1931), 62.

with indigenous terms and metaphors in order to explain the course of negotiations and to represent themselves as thoroughly versed in the ways of Indians. They couched indigenous figures of speech in phrases such as "I am speaking Savage," "to use their terms," "as they put it," or "these are the terms...I used in speaking to them," usually adding an explanation in idiomatic French ("that is to say..."). [198] Their efforts at translation extended to noting which Native "signatures" corresponded to the individual headmen and nations that formed part of their alliance—an attempt to impose schematic order on pictograms that were otherwise unintelligible to them (Figures 8-9). They presumed that the crown would be able to perceive the underlying truth of affairs thanks to the speeches and reports that they sent, many of which opened with formulas along the lines of "You will see, My Lord, by their words and my responses..." [199] As Vaudreuil assured the minister in a typical missive from 1704, "The conflicts of the Savages of the upper country and the steps taken by the English to embroil us with the Iroquois would have caused me trouble, if I did not see in all the speeches the latter have made to me, the mind they have to abide by the peace treaty [of 1701], which you will see, My Lord, from the words of the Senecas of May 30, those of the Cayuga of July 2, and those of the Mohawk on the 11th of that same month." [200]

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[198] For instance, Frontenac to Pontchartrain, 10 October 1692, reproduced in *RAPQ* (1927-1928), 119; Vaudreuil to Pontchartrain, 4 November 1706, ANOM COL C11A, vol. 24, ff. 214-237, reproduced in *RAPQ* (1938-1939), 161; Vaudreuil and Raudot to Pontchartrain, 24 July 1707, ANOM COL C11A, vol. 26: ff. 54-61, reproduced in *RAPQ* (1939-1940), 380-381.

[199] See, for example, Vaudreuil and Bégon to Pontchartrain, 15 November 1703, reproduced in *RAPQ* (1938-1939), 12; Vaudreuil, Bégon, and Raudot to Pontchartrain, 19 October 1705, ANOM COL C11A, vol. 22, ff. 171-200, reproduced in *RAPQ* (1938-1939), 80; Vaudreuil to Pontchartrain, 19 October 1705, ANOM COL C11A, vol. 22, ff. 235-254, reproduced in *RAPQ* (1938-1939), 93.

[200] Vaudreuil to Pontchartrain, 16 Nov 1704, ANOM COL C11A, vol. 22, ff. 34-40, reproduced in *RAPQ* (1938-1939), 45.

As Vaudreuil's invocation of the Great Peace attests, Native speeches, and French interpretations of them, took on added significance after *Onontio*'s role shifted from war chief to guarantor of the peace. No longer embroiled in constant bloodshed, the French were now absorbed in a constant and widespread effort to prevent it. Under these circumstances, it seemed more important than ever for governors to discern their allies' true intentions. When were they genuinely committed to peace, and when were they merely stalling for time or seeking to recruit the French to intervene in their internecine conflicts? What was really going on, politically, in Native settlements along and beyond the Great Lakes? In response to these questions, governors and their agents insisted that answers could be found in the careful reading of headmen's words.

The exchange of speeches and reports between Canada and Versailles was meant to collapse the distance between firsthand and secondhand experience by giving officials on both sides of the Atlantic a common record of their diplomacy, yet conflicts of interpretation did arise, and in those moments governors insisted on their own privileged understanding of the speeches delivered in council. In Vaudreuil's case, for instance, the crown acknowledged that he had unique insight into Indian affairs and rarely disputed his conduct or conclusions.[201] But sometimes the minister or the king challenged him to account for speeches that seemed weak or indecisive enough to risk his personal dignity and the honor of France.[202] On those occasions,

[201] "His Majesty has approved that you spoke to [the Miamis] the way you did," confirmed one letter from Pontchartrain in 1704. "His Majesty has seen and approved the speeches of the Senecas and the Onondagas addressed to the Sieur Marquis de Vaudreuil and the responses he gave to them," read another. Pontchartrain to Vaudreuil, 14 June 1704, and "Mémoire du Roi aux...Vaudreuil et Bégon," 14 June 1704, reproduced in *RAPQ* (1938-1939), 26, 30.

[202] Pontchartrain to Vaudreuil, 17 June 1705, reproduced in *RAPQ* (1938-1939), 70.

Vaudreuil touted his years of experience, alleging that his words had been misconstrued through the (discreetly implied) ignorance of his faraway superiors. "I am persuaded...that the tranqullity of this colony depends on peace with the Savages," Vaudreuil responded after Pontchartrain accused him of "softness" toward the Iroquois. "I neglect nothing to Continue it...which I do with honor, and without degrading the Character which I have [the honor] of occupying." The governor went on to explain how his seeming prevarications had in fact responded effectively to the words of the Iroquois and prevented the renewal of hostilities between the Five Nations and the Odawa. "I can give you no better indication of it than to send You the attached speeches," he maintained. If the minister doubted their accuracy, Vaudreuil reminded him that *Onontio*'s words passed through several hands and stood as a matter of public knowledge: "I speak in public [*devant le monde*], I have several Interpreters, and I am able neither to alter the truth nor to render the speeches in a way that would suit my purposes in order to mislead you."[203]

In the years following the Great Peace, speech transcripts became an essential lens through which the crown perceived the true state of Native diplomacy. They served as the empirical basis not only for strategy and policymaking, but also for determing patronage and explicating Native customs. One report prepared by Vaudreuil in 1703 provides a case in point. After hosting several Iroquois emissaries to reaffirm the peace and ensure that its terms were being observed, he ordered his secretary to send copies of everyone's speeches to Versailles. When they arrived, an unnamed "specialist" (likely an ex-colonial official) summarized them for

[203] Vaudreuil to Pontchartrain, 4 November 1706, ANOM COL C11A, vol. 24, ff. 214-237, reproduced in *RAPQ* (1938-1939), 160-161.

Pontchartrain, who then made his own annotations in the margins. An exchange between Vaudreuil and a Seneca named Oronatiez over whether or not Joncaire should winter among the Iroquois was rendered as follows:

Oronatiez: 3rd *collier*: We beg you, my father, by this wampum belt to give us your son Joncaire to be witness to what passes between us and the English this winter and he will tell you of it this spring...	Vaudreuil: You have asked me for your son Joncaire to go winter with you and be witness to what happens in your town; I would very much like to give him to you...at the same time I recommend him to you and give him to you only out of my esteem for you.
Summary of Oronatiez's speech: That they beg him as their father to give them their son Joncaire to be witness to what happens between them and the English this winter in order to give [Vaudreuil] a report of it this spring...	Summary of Vaudreuil's reply: That he would very much like to give them their son Joncaire whom he gives them and recommends to them only out of his esteem for them...
Comment: The *sieur* Joncaire has a great deal of credit among them. He is of a character of mind to manage them well and merits that we do something for him.	Comment: [Vaudreuil] has done very well to give him the s[ieur] Joncaire, whom they call their son, because, having made him their prisoner in an action in which he did his duty very well, they spared him his life and adopted him as their son.

Minister: Good.	Minister: Advise to explain this fact.[204]

To be sure, the ministry's interpretation flattened "Seneca" desires and framed them within familiar political categories (of patriarchal power, for example). Nevertheless, the intellectual labor involved was sophisticated. Carried out from year to year and in a succession of similar documents, it defined for the minister who the various Indian nations were, what they wanted, and who among the French had the "character of mind" necessary to "manage" them.[205]

In this way, diplomatic speeches and the paperwork surrounding them became a burgeoning administrative ethnography of Indians controlled by the crown. In the course of reporting and interpreting encounters with indigenous headmen, royal administrators made definitive claims about Native culture and how it could best be manipulated to advance the king's interests. It was no accident that in this same

[204] Excerpted from "Paroles des Sauvages au Sr de Vaudreuil et les réponses dudit sr de Vaudreuil en 1703" and "Paroles du Chef nommé Oronatyez Sonnontouan à Monsieur de Vaudreuil," 25 October 1703, ANOM COL C11A, vol. 21, ff. 68-86v.

[205] For similar documents, see the following in ANOM COL C11A, vol. 31: "Parolles des sauvages Onnontaguez a Monsieur le marquis de Vaudreuil, a Montreal, le 28 janvier 1710," ff. 89-92; "Reponses de Vaudreuil," 29 January 1710, ff. 92-96v; "Parolles des Iroquois Sonnontouans et Onnontaguez," 8 August 1710, ff. 98-105v; "Parolles des sauvages de Michilimackinac, Outaouacs et autres, descendus avec le Sr. d'Argenteuil," 29 July 1710, ff. 114-120v; "Parolles de Monsieur le Gouverneur general aux Onnontaguez et Sonnontouans qui s'en retournent le 31 Aoust 1711," ff. 100-103. Also see the many requests for pensions and promotions made by French governors on behalf of clients such as Joncaire, Perrot, Le Moine, Henri de Tonty, Louis de La Porte de Louvigny, and others who allegedly had shown "perfect knowledge" of how to "master the minds" of Native peoples. For example, La Barre to Seignelay, 4 November 1683, ANOM COL C11A, vol. 6, ff. 134-144, reproduced in Dubé, *La Nouvelle-France sous Joseph-Antoine Le Febvre de La Barre*, 91-93; Vaudreuil to Pontchartrain, 15 November 1703, reproduced in *RAPQ* (1938-1939), 17, 19; Vaudreuil to Pontchartrain, 3 and 4 November 1706, reproduced in *RAPQ* (1938-1939), 161.

period La Potherie (1703), Raudot (c. 1709), Perrot (c. 1715), and others all produced extensive texts that sought to capture the essential "nature" of Indians and identify the passions that governed their hearts. The ultimate aim of their studies, these authors made clear, was to preserve France's hard-won pre-eminence and "free these peoples...to adopt our ways and customs."[206] They grounded their conclusions first and foremost in what they and their fellow officers had seen and done firsthand. Their writings affirmed that knowing and mastering Indians was a matter of living among them, learning their ways, and moving through the world as they did, however temporarily. In the epistolary preface to his volume on Native customs, La Potherie aptly captured the conventional wisdom that cross-cultural learning and cross-cultural performance were intertwined processes: "No doubt you were surprised to learn of my metamorphosis," he announced to his imagined correspondent, "it is but the strangeness and changeability of the human heart. I am now an Iroquois, & you will permit me to tell you a few facts about my nation."[207]

Conclusion

In October 1711, New France was again at war: the British were preparing to invade the colony by land and sea, and nearly seven hundred Iroquois warriors had massed at Albany, ready to break the Great Peace that French officials had struggled mightily to maintain for the past decade. With the recent news that Acadia had fallen, Vaudreuil was desperate to mobilize Canada's defenses. Having heard that his allies were reluctant to fight a superior and seemingly ascendant foe, he invited some eight

[206] An effort they nonetheless acknowledged to be "the work of several centuries," as Raudot put it. Raudot, *Relations*, 62.
[207] La Potherie, *Histoire*, t. IV: 83.

hundred of them to a "general feast" at Montréal, where he hoped to reassure them of French power and kindle their fighting spirit. They arrived to witness an elaborate scene. As a correspondent for the *Mercure galant* of Paris later reported, the Natives had scarcely seated themselves before the governor appeared before them, holding a long pole to which someone had stuck the half-roasted head of a dog. In a coordinated series of movements, Vaudreuil proceeded to hand the pole to a subordinate, who carried it back and forth before withdrawing to stand among the Mission Iroquois. A third Frenchman, described only as "a good interpreter of the languages of the western Savages" (probably Perrot), made a similar round before placing himself among the Odawas. "These two officers, posted at the far end of the lines formed by the savage Nations, alternated making...the speech...on the part of Onnonthio, as they call the Governor general of the French in Canada." After the two interpreters had called upon *Onontio*'s children to "carry themselves like men" in making war upon their common enemy, Joncaire stepped forward to encourage those who might still waver:

> Taking up the dog's head at the end of his staff, [Joncaire] danced & sang simultaneously, alone, which is the manner of the Savages, letting his left arm fall along the length of his hips, & turning his head like a madman [*furieux*] right and left, bending and straightening his body by fits and starts [*sacades*], spreading and gripping his knees, although his feet remained close to touching each other. The song consisted only of delivering, with a great effort of the lungs, the interjection *hé*, *hé*, *hé*, which is about the same as that of our woodsmen. [The Indians] responded to this sort of war cry with *ho*, *ho*, *hai*, *ho*, *ho*, *hai*, *hai*, which resembled rather bad Italian music. Several French Officers, who know the ways of the Iroquois, danced & sang one after another, all carrying in hand

> one of the staffs where there was a Dog's head [attached].

At that point the French gave way to several headmen, who also danced and sang while brandishing dog heads. A head was brought to the "chief" of the Mission Iroquois, "who raised an anguished cry to signify to the others that he was going to dance," then, "having played his role, he presented the Dog's head to another Chief...who danced & sang for a long time." The two heads were passed among all of the nations from one headman to another, until it reached the last two, who "broke them open to eat the brains & cried in their language, *thus we will do to our enemies*." After seven more hours of dancing and speeches, "M[onsieu]r the Marquis de Vaudreuil, Onnonthio, who was hosting the feast, had abundant amounts of meat & beer distributed to each family."[208] The governor later informed the minister, with immense satisfaction, that "everyone accepted the tomahawk...and following their manner, made me master of their bodies."[209]

The spectacle may have been new and exotic to some readers of the *Mercure*, but to officials in Canada and the ministry of the Navy, it formed part of an established pattern of indigenized performance honed for more than a century. The self-conscious assumption of "Native" personas, and the self-satisfied claim that such personas achieved real political mastery over Native peoples, had become utterly conventional—in fact, it was now a matter of policy. In subsequent decades, royal officials would request and receive advancement based on their knowledge of Indian customs, produce templates of Native speeches to guide their superiors and

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[208] "Suite de la lettre de Quebec," *Mercure galant* (April 1712): 3-20.

[209] Vaudreuil to Pontchartrain, 25 October 1711, ANOM COL C11A, vol. 32, ff. 41-64, reproduced in *RAPQ* (1946-1947), 433.

successors, and establish the control of "fickle and inconstant savages" as the "most essential...of all the areas of administration" entrusted to governors.[210] By presiding over an alliance built around the performance of *Onontio*, the French believed, they had achieved the imaginative insight necessary to manipulate the passions, motives, and "*esprit*" of Indians. Their administrative culture reflected that conviction.

That is not to say that officials were always successful in attaining their goal, that their conclusions were uncontested, or that their knowledge represented anything more than a sophisticated cultural construct—far from it. There were officers who failed to play the indigenized roles expected of them, failed to adapt to their surroundings, or failed to maintain the confidence of their superiors for any number of personal or circumstantial reasons. Throughout its final five decades of rule in Canada, moreover, the crown would repeatedly intervene in damaging indigenous wars that its agents neither understood nor controlled. The French would never achieve the sort of total subjugation or assimilation of Indians that many thought possible and desirable; nor, of course, did they ever achieve complete or accurate knowledge of the "Native mind" (the singular bears witness to their reductive approach). The ideas about Indians they developed were hardly reflections of some independent empirical reality. Instead, like performances of Indianness, they

[210] The concentration of patronage in the hands of officers believed to possess special influence over Natives is reflected in the careers of the Vaudreuil and Joncaire families. See their entries in the *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*. For imagined and template speeches, see Perrot, *Mémoire des moeurs*, esp. 143-156; Anonymous, "Moyens pour gagner du bien sans que personne en souffre," c. 1726, LAC MG18-G6, vol. 1, pp. 11-15. For centrality of Native governance in royal instructions, see "Mémoire du Roy pour servir d'instruction au Sr [Pierre de Rigaud] de Vaudreuil de Cavagnal, Capitaine de Vaisseau, Gouverneur et Lieutenant général de la Nouvelle-France," 22 March 1755, AN K 1232, pièce 50 and "Extrait des instructions données à Vaudreuil," ANOM COL C11A, vol. 100, ff. 50-51.

followed a logic conditioned by the cultural baggage their makers brought with them to America.

Nonetheless, as far as certain "truths" about Indians became rooted in French administrative discourses and practices, they had a profound impact upon the lives of Natives and Europeans alike. How French officials saw Indians (and, no less important, how Indians saw the French) determined the conduct of war and peace. It guided royal decisions to court some nations and alienate others. As a result, it violently transformed identities, kinship ties, trading relationships, emotional bonds, and patterns of settlement and subsistence. It helped to produce and sustain dynamic ritual personas, above all *Onontio*, which provided a lasting basis for cultural exchange as well as conflict.[211] Most enduringly, it established a conceit that the French were uniquely suited to rule over "savage" peoples, and inaugurated a tradition of writing about Natives as racialized Others.[212]

France's pursuit of Native alliances prefigured modern European attempts to manipulate the "hearts and minds" of indigenous peoples through imitative practices of oratory and self-presentation. Father Jean Tailhan, a Jesuit priest who edited Perrot's memorandum for publication in 1864, drew an explicit analogy between *Metaminens* and the Arab Bureau chiefs of his own day, who immersed themselves in local dialects, customs, and conflicts in order to pacify the Muslim Algerian subjects

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[211] *Onontio* would remain ensconced in his ritual role until the British Conquest of New France in 1763, and even afterward he would be invoked by Native opponents of British expansion who called for his return. See White, *Middle Ground*, 276-290.

[212] On the French experience in New France as the origin of the "*génie colonial*" myth, see Cornelius Jaenen, " 'Les Sauvages Ameriquains': Persistence into the 18th Century of Traditional French Concepts and Constructs for Apprehending Amerindians," *Ethnohistory*, vol. 29, no. 1 (1982): 43-56; Gregory Dowd, "Wag the Imperial Dog: Indians and Overseas Empires in North America, 1650-1776," in *A Companion to American Indian History*, eds. Philip Deloria and Neal Salisbury (Oxford, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2004), 55-56.

of France's Second Empire.[213] Carefully orchestrated patterns of "going Native" became a common tool of governance, diplomacy, and warfare in European empires.[214] Still today, the synthesis of learning, performance, and persuasion across cultures lies at the heart of policing and counterinsurgency strategies employed by Western militaries abroad, including the U.S. Army and Marine Corps, whose leaders tout figures such as T. E. Lawrence and John Paul Vann as models.[215] It also lies at the heart—quite literally—of the modern Canadian government's contested efforts to negotiate the legal status of Aboriginals.[216]

Nearly two and a half centuries after Frontenac brandished the tomahawk and led the war dance, George Orwell wrote about the appalling necessity of the colonizer "to do what the 'natives' expect of him." The tendency of European officials to see themselves as "the leading actor of the piece" in colonial encounters, he observed,

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[213] "He was...under the successive governments of Messieurs de la Barre, Denonville and Frontenac (1684-1699), tasked with a command analogous to that of our Arab Bureau chiefs in Algeria." Perrot, *Mémorie*, vi.

[214] For a recent overview of the literature on "going Native" in everyday imperial contexts, see Roque, "Mimesis and Colonialism."

[215] U.S. Army and Marine Corps, *U.S. Army/Marine Corps Counterinsurgency Field Manual* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2008); Robert D. Ramsey III, "Advice for Advisors: Suggestions and Observations from Lawrence to the Present," Global War on Terrorism Occasional Paper 19 (Fort Leavenworth: Combat Studies Institute Press, 2006); Montgomery McFate, "Culture," in *Understanding Counterinsurgency Warfare: Doctrine, Operations, and Challenges*, eds. Thomas Rid and Thomas Keaney (London: Routledge, 2010), 189-203; Alasdair Soussi, "Lawrence of Arabia, guiding US Army in Iraq and Afghanistan," *The Christian Science Monitor*, 19 June 2010, URL: http://www.csmonitor.com/World/2010/0619/Lawrence-of-Arabia-guiding-US-Army-in-Iraq-and-Afghanistan (accessed 3 July 2016).

[216] "Canada's governor general eats raw heart after gutting seal," *The Telegraph*, 26 May 2009, URL: http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/northamerica/canada/5389934/Canadas-governor-general-eats-raw-heart-after-gutting-seal.html (accessed 3 July 2016); "Governor General's seal snack sparks controversy," *Canadian Broadcasting Corporation*, 26 May 2009, URL: http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/governor-general-s-seal-snack-sparks-controversy-1.833274 (accessed 3 July 2016); Mitch Potter, "Jean's seal meal sparks feeding frenzy," *Toronto Star*, 27 May 2009, URL: https://www.thestar.com/news/canada/2009/05/27/jeans_seal_meal_sparks_feeding_frenzy.html (3 July 2016).

ignored the reality that their power was constrained by indigenous expectations.[217] The same insight guided the French administrative manuals of his time, whose authors, less concerned than Orwell about the degrading effects of imperialism, earnestly sought to "reform" *indigènes* by strategically accommodating their perceived customs and "political mentalities."[218] To the extent that early modern colonizers such as Frontenac and Perrot defined *Onontio* as a tool for the manipulation of "savage" peoples, they presaged the belief among their successors in France—and elsewhere in the West—that the governance of colonized subjects was largely a question of wearing the masks that Natives expected to see.

[217] George Orwell, *Shooting an Elephant, and Other Essays* (London: Harcourt, 1950 ed.; orig. 1936), 6.

[218] See, for example, Robert Arnaud, *L'Islam et la politique musulmane française en Afrique occidentale française* (Paris: Comité de l'Afrique Française, 1912); Ministre de la Guerre, *Manuel élémentaire à l'usage des officiers et sous-officiers chargés à commander des indigènes coloniaux (Indochinois-Sénégalais-Malgaches) dans la métropole* (Paris: Charles-Lavauzelle, 1923); Joseph-Simon Gallieni, *Madagascar de 1896 à 1905: rapport du Général Galliéni, Gouverneur Général au Ministre des Colonies*, 2 vols. (Tananarive: Imprimerie Officielle de Tananarive, 1905); Jacques Frémeaux, *Les Bureaux arabes dans l'Algérie de la conquête* (Paris: Denoël, 1993).

Figure 8. Political map of Northeastern North America during the Iroquois ("Beaver") Wars, c. 1642-1701. Source: Francis Jennings, *The Ambiguous Iroquois Empire* (New York: Norton & Company, 1984).

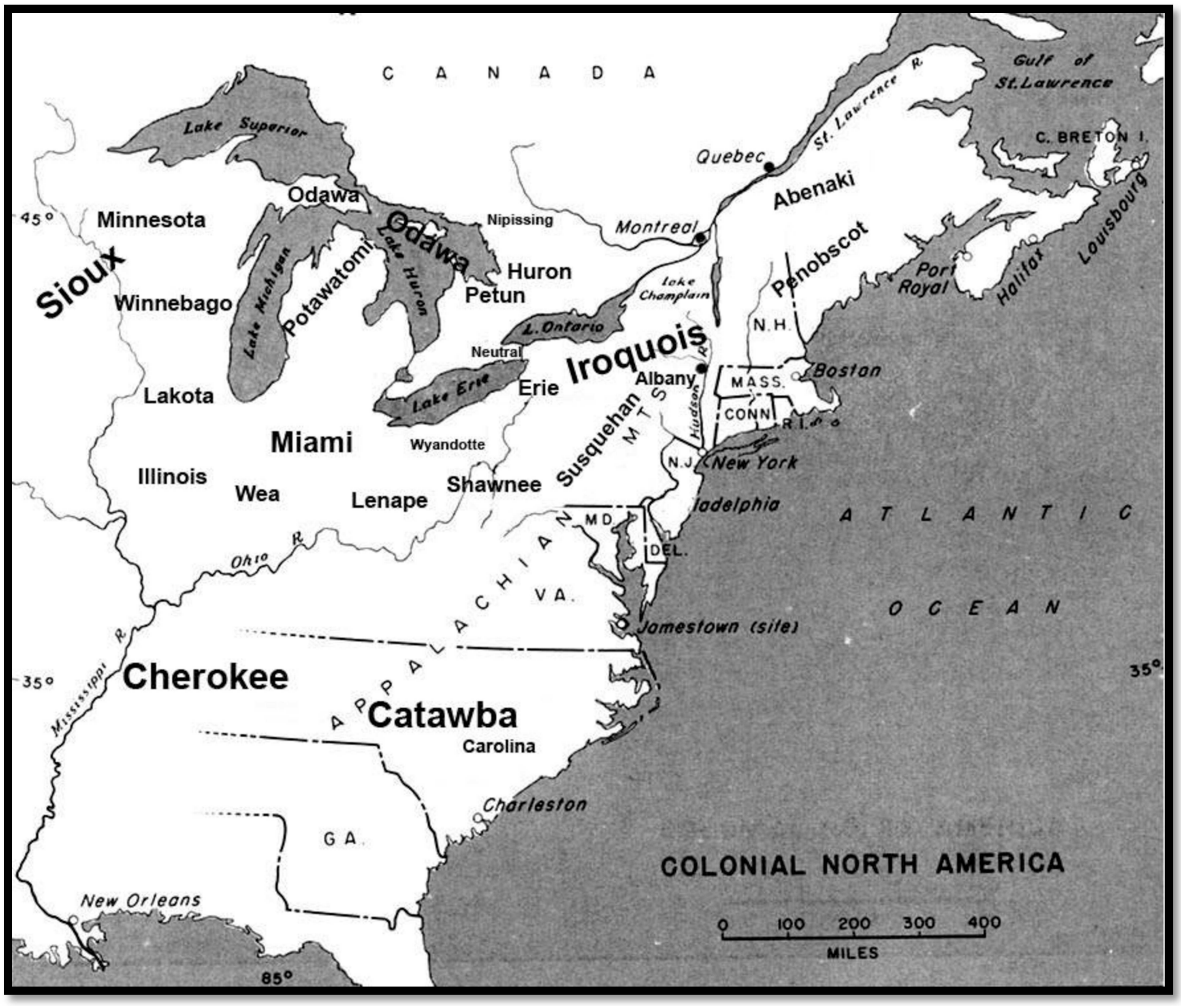


Figure 9. La Barre and the Onondaga headman Outreouti at La Famine, 5 September 1684. Source: Lahontan, *Nouveaux voyages dans l'Amérique septentrionale* (1703).

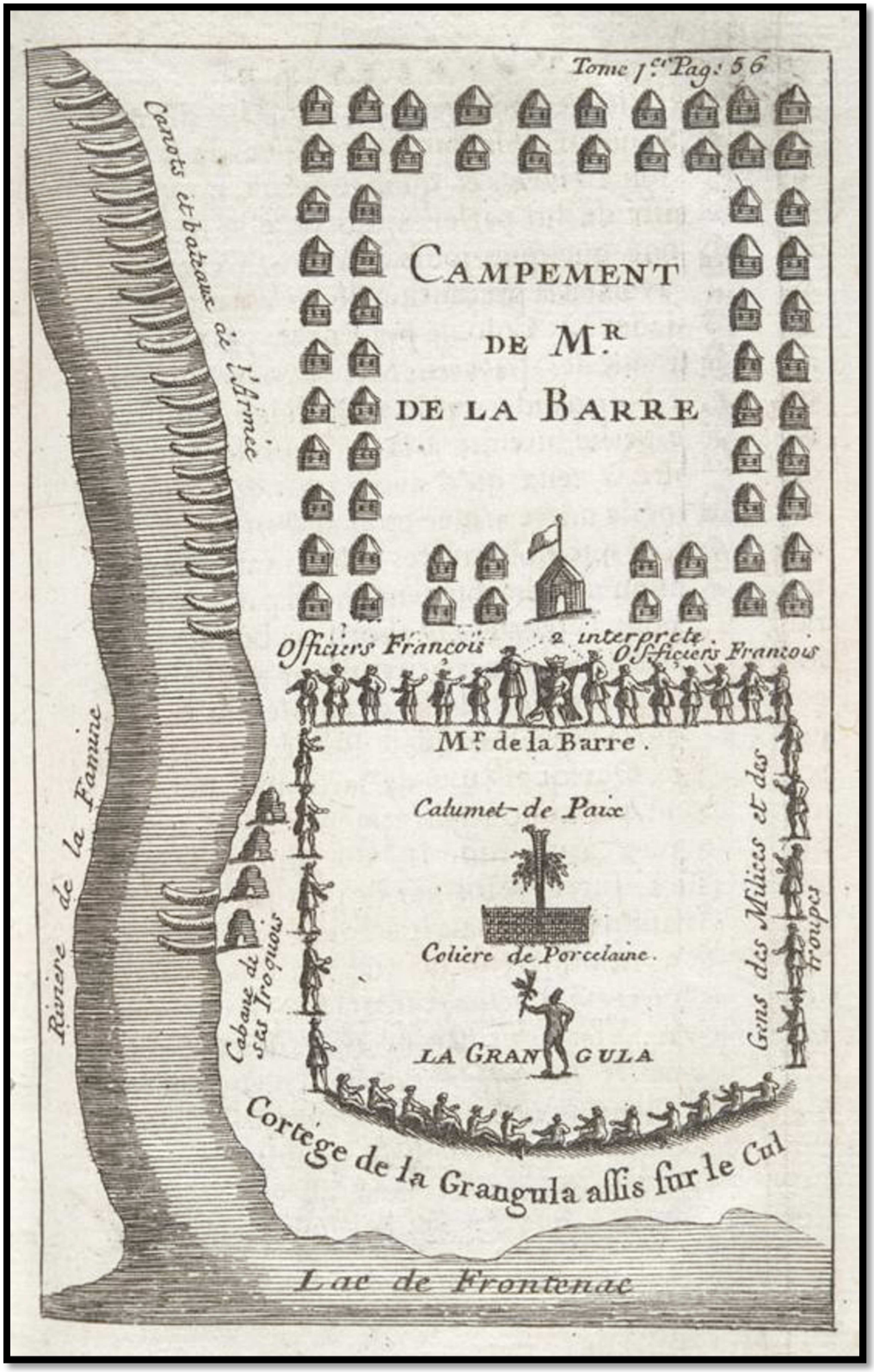


Figure 10. French and Haudenosee (Iroquois) emissaries at La Famine. Source: Lahontan, *Nouveaux voyages* (1703).

Figure 11. Scenes of Native diplomacy, including a council of headmen, the war dance, the dance of the calumet, and the presentation of the peace pipe. Source: Lahontan, *Nouveaux voyages* (1703).

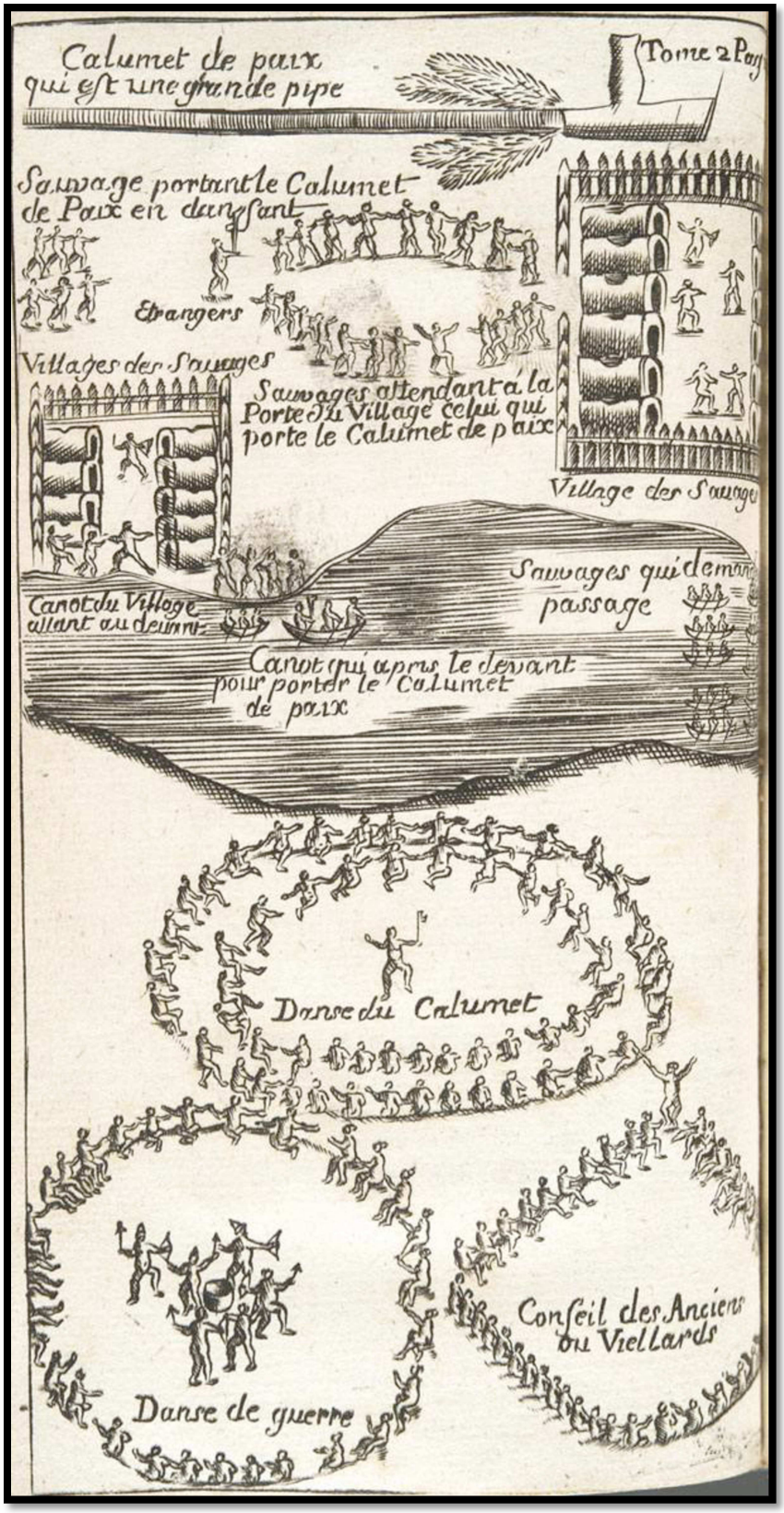


Figure 12. Section of Nicolas Le Fer's 1698 map of the Americas, featuring a scene in which Illinois headmen dance the *calumet* to welcome French officers. "One Dances it when, after they have recited all their War Stories, he dances around this Pole," Le Fer observed, following descriptions printed in France. "Their Greatest mark of friendship, sincerity, and good faith is when they invite you to Smoke from their Calumet." Source: BnF, Cartes et Plans, GE D-11602.

Figure 13. Image representing the negotiations over the Treaty of Ryswick in 1697. François de Callières—Louis XIV's private secretary, author of a guide to diplomatic negotiation, and brother of Governor of New France Louis-Hector de Callières (1698-1703)—is seated at center-left, beneath the letter 'C'. Source: "La cérémonie du mariage de Monseigneur le Duc de Bourgogne avec Madame la Princesse de Savoie...avec les actions de Guerre et de Paix de l'Année 1697" (Paris: Langlois, 1698).

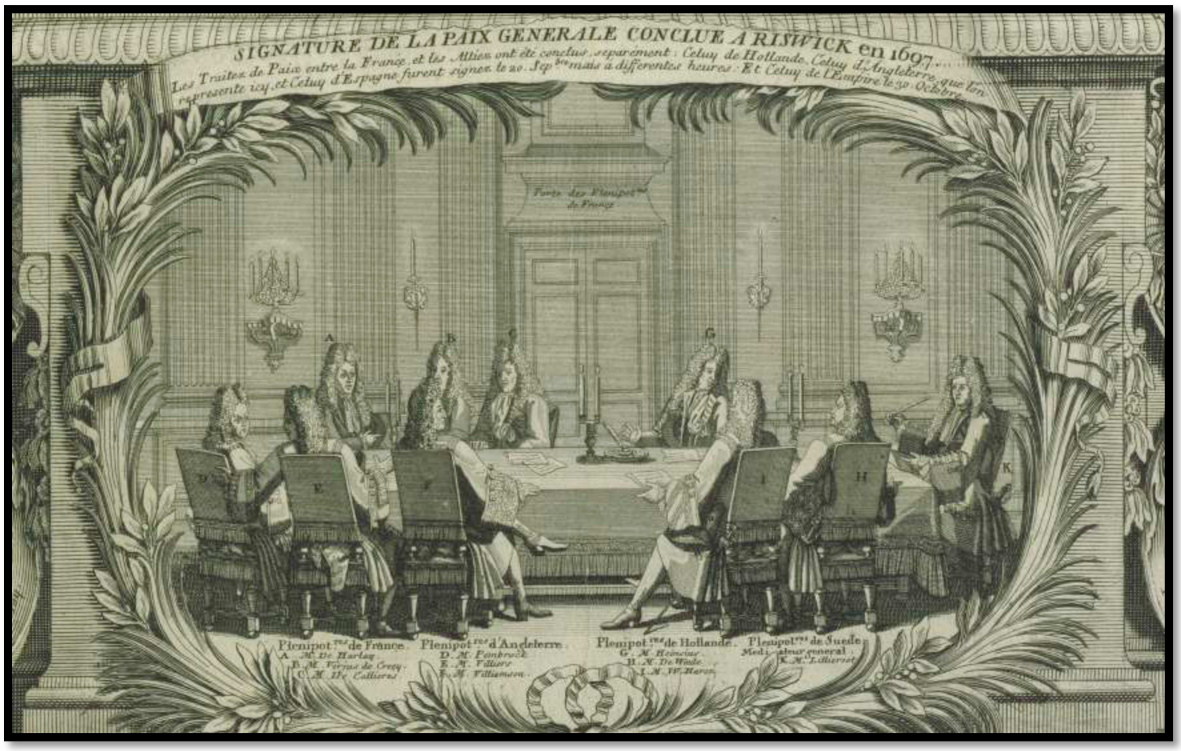
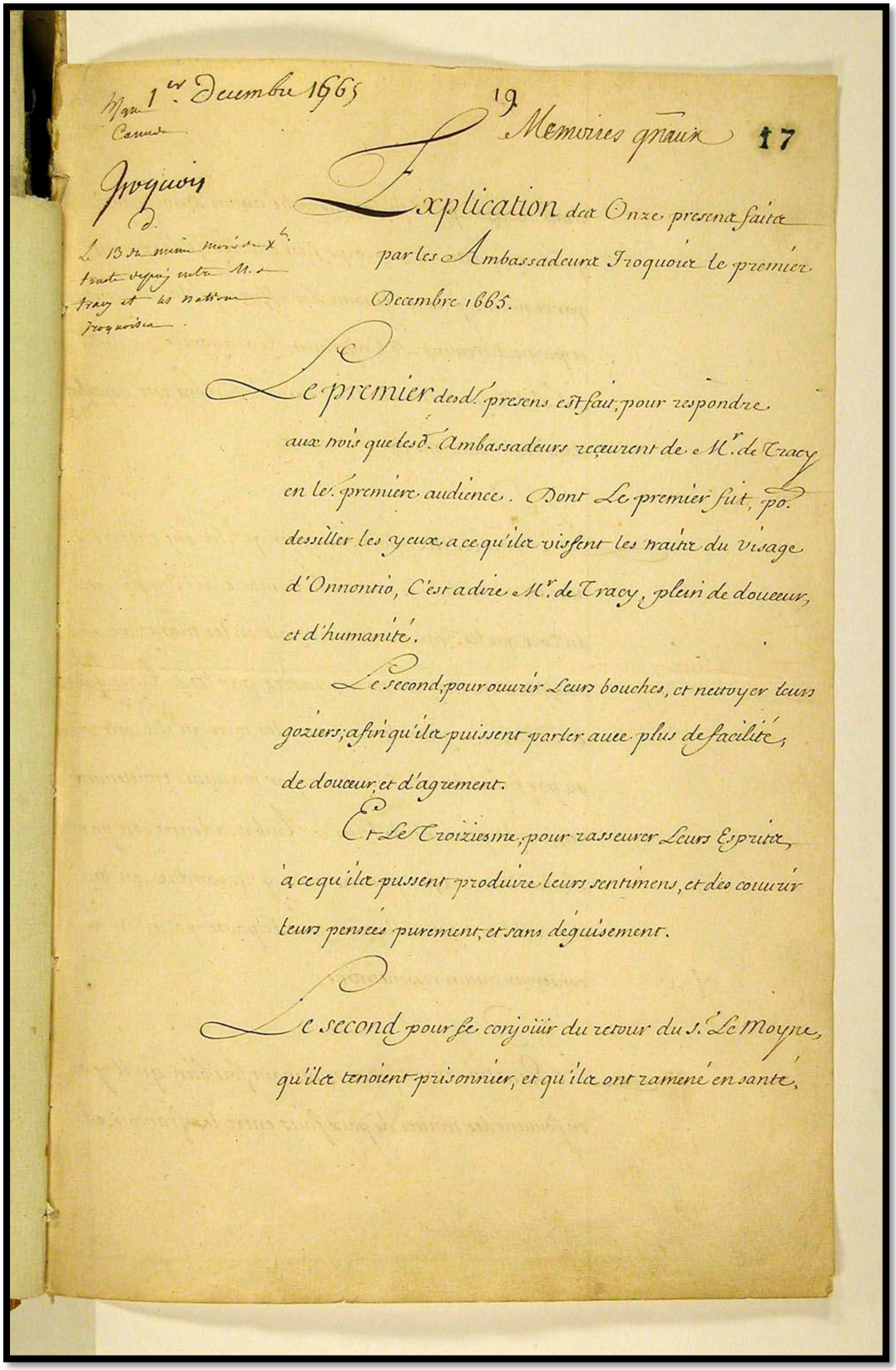


Figure 14. First page of the "Explication des onze presens faits par les Ambassadeurs Iroquois le premier Decembre 1665," 1 December 1665. Source: ANOM COL F3, vol. 2, f. 17.



1er. Decembre 1665

19 Memoires gnaux 17

Iroquois

Explication des Onze presens faits par les Ambassadeurs Iroquois le premier Decembre 1665.

Le premier des dt. presens est fait pour respondre aux trois que les dt. Ambassadeurs receurent de Mr. de Tracy en le. premiere audience. Dont Le premier fut, po. dessiller les yeux a ce qu'ils visent les traits du visage d'Onnontio, C'est a dire Mr. de Tracy, plein de douceur, et d'humanité.

Le second, pour ouurir Leurs bouches, et nettoyer leurs goziers; afin qu'ils puissent parler auec plus de facilité, de douceur, et d'agrement.

Et Le Troiziesme, pour rasseurer Leurs Esprits, a ce qu'ils pussent produire leurs sentimens, et des couurir leurs pensees purement, et sans deguisement.

Le second pour se conjoüir du retour du S. Le Moyne, qu'ils tenoient prisonnier, et qu'ils ont ramené en santé,

Figure 15. Native pictograms drawn by headmen who agreed to the Great Peace of 1701. French officials noted, next to each "signature," the nation or band they took the headman to represent, and sometimes the figure represented by his mark. Source: ANOM COL C11A, vol. 19, f. 41v.

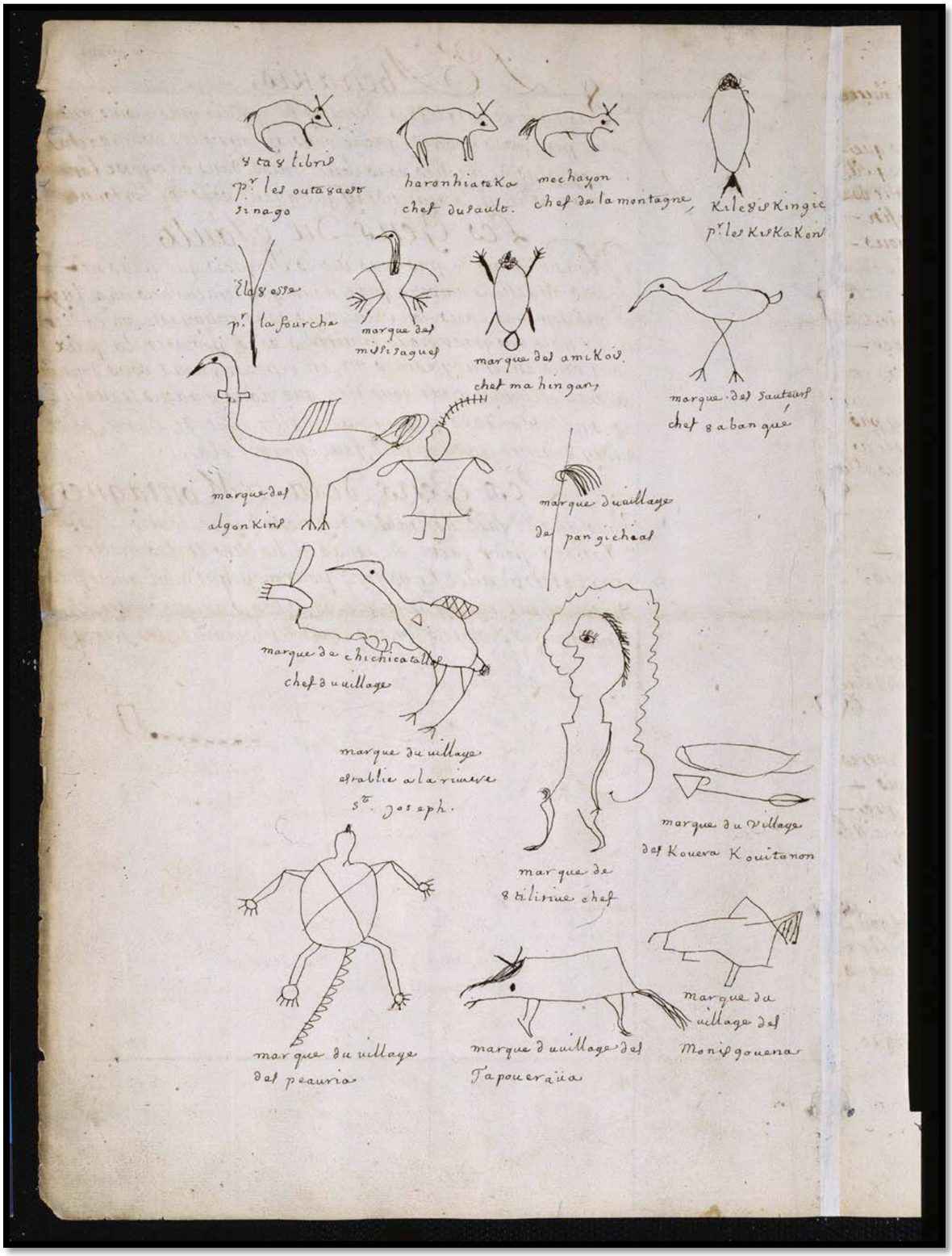


Figure 16. Speeches delivered by Huron (Wendat), Odawa, Saki, and Miami headmen during the Great Peace. When they could, French officials noted the names of the individual headmen who spoke, as well as the specific "nations" or bands from which they came. Source: ANOM COL C11A, vol. 19, f.

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Et vous y mîtes des racines et des feuilles pour que nous y fussions a l'abry, nous esperons presentement que tout le monde entend ce que vous dites, qu'on ne touchera point a cet arbre, pour nous, nous vous asseurons, par ces quatre colliers que nous suiurons tout ce que vous auez reglé; nous vous presentons deux prisonniers que voicy et nous vous rendrons les autres que nous auons, Nous esperons aussy presentement que les portes sont ouuertes pour la paix, qu'on nous renuoyera le reste des nostres,

Les hurons,

Nous voila icy comme vous l'auez demandé, nous vous presentons douze prisonniers, dont cinq veullent retourner auec nous, pour les sept autres vous en ferez ce qu'il vous plaira, nous vous remercions de la paix que vous nous auez procurée et nous la ratifions auec ioye,

Jean le blanc outaouac du Sable,

Ie vous ay obey mon pere aussy tost que vous m'auez demandé en vous ramenant deux prisonniers dont vous estes le maistre quand vous m'auez commandé d'aller a la guerre ie l'ay fait, et a present que vous me le deffendez ie y obey, ie vous demande mon pere par ce collier que les iroquois delient mon corps qui est chez eux, et qu'il me le renuoyent (c'est a dire les gens de sa nation)

Saingouessy outaouac Sinago,

Ie n'ay pas voulu manquer a vos ordres mon pere quoique ie n'usse point de prisonniers, Cependant voila vne femme et vn enfant que i'ay rachepté de vous ferez ce qu'il vous plaira, et voila vn calumet que ie donne aux iroquois pour fumer comme freres quand nous nous rencontrerons.

Chichicatalo, Chef des Miamis

Ie vous ay obey mon pere en vous ramenant 8 prisonniers Iroquois pour en faire ce qu'il vous plaira, Si i'auois eu des Canots, ie vous en aurois amené dauantage, quoy que ie ne voye point icy des miens qui sont chez les iroquois, ie vous rameneray ce qui m'en reste, Si vous le souhaitte, ou ie leur ouuriray les portes pour qu'ils s'en retournent,

Onanguisset pour Les Sakis,

Ie ne sais qu'on mesme corps auec vous mon Pere, voila vn prisonnier Iroquois que j'auois fait a la guerre, souffrez qu'en vous le presentant ie luy donne vn calumet pour emporter chez les Iroquois et fumer quand nous nous rencontrerons, ie vous remercie

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Epilogue

One myth about France's first colonial empire is that it was a "blank page" on which Louis XIV "could inscribe his ideals."[1] "When I want to discover the spirit and vices of Louis XIV's government," Alexis de Tocqueville declared in perhaps the most famous statement of the legend,

> It is to Canada that I must go. There we can see the deformities of the object as if through a microscope...Nothing prevented the central power from abandoning itself to all of its natural inclinations and moulding all of the laws according to the spirit that animated it...An intendant wielding far greater power than his counterparts in France; an administration intruding on much more than it did in the metropole, and wanting to do everything through Paris, despite the 1,800 leagues that separated them; never adopting the great principles that could render the colony populous and prosperous, but rather employing all manner of little artificial procedures and petty regulatory tyrannies to increase and scatter the population: forced agriculture, the need to farm in a certain way, the obligation to live in certain places instead of others, every dispute over land referred to a tribunal and decided by the administration alone, etc...One might believe himself already in Algeria, in the midst of modern centralization. Canada is indeed the faithful image of what we have always seen there....this administration, almost as numerous as the population itself, dominant, demanding, regulatory, restrictive, wanting to plan and take charge of everything, always knowing a subject's interests better than himself, relentlessly active and sterile.[2]

Another, equally powerful myth says that France's colonies bore few marks of metropolitan rule.[3] This dissertation challenges both interpretations for the half-century prior to Louis XIV's death. It chronicles the efforts of French officials to

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[1] Peter Moogk, *La Nouvelle France—A Cultural History* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2000), 59.

[2] Alexis de Tocqueville, *L'ancien régime et la révolution* (Paris: Lévy, 1856), 408-409.

[3] The most prominent recent statement of this version being Pritchard, *In Search of Empire*.

impose a familiar brand of public order on the New World and tracks the ways in which their experiences changed the crown's perception of its colonies. Royal governance overseas, like royal governance in France, was neither timeless nor unchanging; it was the product of cultural, political, and material processes that converged upon the Americas with particular force after 1663.

Over the course of the eighteenth century, the Old Regime state's perception of its colonies as component parts of a single imperial project was reflected with growing clarity in the structure and staffing of its administration. In 1710, the crown combined the three wings of the naval ministry, the Ponant, the Levant, and the *fonds*, into a single *Bureau des Colonies*. From that point forward the king promoted governors and intendants almost exclusively from within the ranks of the naval officer corps rather than the army or the Parisian magistracy.[4] The ministry hoped to avoid the headaches caused by old soldiers like Bouloc or miscast magistrates like La Barre who arrived in America without any grasp of the special procedures, personnel, and problems that now patterned its approach to colonial governance. By following an increasingly rigid and well-defined *cursus honorum* that began in the fleets and ports of the realm, the thinking went, officials would practice the "details" and acquire the "knowledge" necessary to police an empire that had developed an administrative culture all its own.[5]

Officials thought this way because decades of experience in direct royal governance had taught them two fundamental lessons about the colonies: first, that

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[4] See the personnel dossiers of the various colonial governors and intendants appointed after this date, which are grouped alphabetically in ANOM COL E.

[5] Anonymous clerk, "Notes sur la Manutention du Bureau des Colonies," and Monsieur P., "Observations sur les Bureaux des Colonies," undated (c. 1772), AN Marine C2, vol. 120, ff. 1-4v, 4v-5.

they were alike in their essential difference from the metropole, and second, that they were ruled primarily through a series of ports. Clerks of the ministry repeated both lessons when they reviewed the state of the Bureau sometime in the years after 1768. They explained that the colonies required their own administration not only because their business "comprises almost every element of [the administration] of an entire Kingdom in its own right," but also because their affairs were unique. In addition to regulating slavery, maritime trade, and naval warfare, imperial administrators imposed extraordinary taxes, oversaw officers whose powers "extend far beyond those we give to our provincial governments," and made the "endless modifications" to French laws "demanded by the difference of things and people."[6] The ministry had learned long ago that training in combat or the law was not sufficient to these tasks. To govern colonial settlements, "One must have knowledge of another kind, which cannot be found in Versailles or Paris. It is only in the details of ports and in campaigns at sea that it can be acquired... only with one's own eyes and on site, in the midst of operations." Combined with a thorough review of the paperwork describing "all that he may not know about the colonies," firsthand experience in the Royal Marine gave an officer the sort of portable *connaissances* that he would need to serve anywhere in the empire.[7]

By the mid-eighteenth century, colonial empire was firmly ensconced as an affair of state. It enjoyed not only a specialized bureau and a corps of specialized administrators, but also its own archives, its own budgets, and its own reformers. It also held a prominent place in the crown's strategic thinking. When royal ministers

[6] "Observations sur les Bureaux des Colonies," ff. 1-1v.
[7] "Observations sur les Bureaux des Colonies," ff. 5v-6.

debated the future of French *grandeur* in the midst of the Seven Years' War, they devoted particular attention to the fate of the colonies and what it would mean for the balance of power in Europe. In 1759, the future controller-general of finance, Étienne de Silhouette, excavated a decade-old memorandum by the late governor-general of New France, Roland-Michel Barrin de La Galissonnière, to draft an appeal to Foreign Minister Étienne de Choiseul. "Few people today would disagree that [colonies] are in some way necessary to a Great State," Silhouette argued, echoing the governor. "If anyone still doubts it, it would be enough to disabuse them to cast their eyes on the products listed in the King's accounts, on the immense quantities of goods and manufactures that pass through the Colonies, [and] on the returns they bring which are so necessary to the industries and patterns of consumption that have become habitual and to some extent indispensable to the kingdom." The "utility" of the colonies was not only visible in France, he continued: anyone passing through the Antilles would encounter many once-poor wretches and humble families who had enriched themselves "in only a short time, and almost without any risk." If Canada and Louisiana were decidedly poorer, they were nonetheless vital, as the "boulevards of America," to the integrity of the empire as a whole. It was quite clear to Silhouette, as it had been to La Galissonière, that whatever the colonies had cost France to establish and maintain, they were now too valuable to be "abandoned to our jealous neighbors."[8]

[8] The Marquis laid out his views in 1750, after which Silhouette rediscovered them and added his own gloss in a memorandum to Choiseul. La Galissonière and Silhouette, "Mémoire sur les colonies de France dans l'Amérique septentrionale," December 1750 and c. February 1759, ANOM COL C11A, vol. 96, ff. 249-250, 269v-270.

Silhouette was moved to defend the colonies because France's entire geopolitical strategy, centered on an Atlantic empire established according to Antoine-Denis Raudot's best-laid plans, had been shattered when General James Wolfe and his men captured Louisbourg six months earlier. The loss had prompted some in the ministry of the navy and colonies to call for a radical reorientation of French aims. In a memorandum to Minister Nicolas René Berryer in December 1758, the influential Marquis de Capellis, recently returned from a tour of duty in the Americas, recommended an exchange of territories with Britain and Spain. He proposed that the lower Saint Lawrence Valley, which had proven too vast and expensive to colonize properly, be given to Britain in exchange for Minorca and Newfoundland. The arrangement, he claimed, would free the 50,000 inhabitants of Canada to migrate to the warmer and more fertile climes of Louisiana, which could easily be done because Governor Rigaud de Vaudreuil, "who served for several years in Louisiana and is adored by the Canadians and the Savages," would "make them do the impossible." Meanwhile France could arrange for Spain to receive Port Mahon and Gibraltar in return for Santo Domingo. These dealings would liberate France to concentrate its energies on the Caribbean—"which is much more valuable than Canada"—without completely abandoning access to the fisheries, forests, and furs of North America. No less important, he predicted with remarkable foresight, they would deal an insidious blow to Britain, whose annexation of Canada's "vast deserts" would "accelerate [Britain's] ruin by hastening the defection of its American colonies, which will soon surpass the wealth of England and no doubt shake off the

yoke of their metropole."[9] With a navy rebuilt according to principles Capellis would detail in a separate memorandum, France could position itself to take advantage in the next war.[10]

Silhouette disagreed with this line of thinking not because he was particularly attached to Canada (he had already submitted his own proposal to forcibly relocate France's Canadian colonists and Native allies to Louisiana), but because he saw in the pleas of Capellis and others to cede the colony a camouflaged retreat from colonization *tout court*. "I cannot help but suspect that the difficulty of maintaining Canada is the real source of all the reasons with which we seek to color its abandonment," he warned. "If that is so, we could soon see the rebirth of the gothic System, [which holds] that France can do without Colonies, and that she has need only of soldiers and laborers." That sort of thinking played right into Britain's hands. Having spent time in England and studied its leaders, he could assure Choiseul that they saw the "system of America" as fundamentally tied to the "system of Europe." The conquest of Canada was merely the first step in their inveterate campaign to capture all of France's New World dominions. If Choiseul permitted it, he would forsake the ministry's longstanding commitment to its colonies and reduce France to the rank of a second-tier state like Russia: "Russia does not lack for soldiers, she does not lack for laborers...Yet Russia receives subsidies from foreign powers." The truth, Silhouette insisted, was that "something more is needed for the dignity, the grandeur, and the Power of a State, above all a State that is bounded for the most part by the

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[9] François de Capellis, "Mémoire concernant les Colonies et relatif à la Paix," 11 December 1758, ANOM C11A, vol. 103, 497-499v; Capellis to Berryer, 11 December 1758, ANOM COL C11A, vol. 103, ff. 500-501 ("deserts").

[10] Capellis, "Esquisse d'une réforme ou reconstitution de la marine française," 1758, AN Marine CITE.

sea, and which has for its capital enemy a nation whose Power consists principally in its naval forces": the independence afforded by a robust colonial empire.[11]

Like the bureaucratic reviews of ministerial clerks, the competing appeals of Silhouette and Capellis bring together several themes that run throughout the preceding chapters. Arguments grounded in firsthand experience or the expertise of officials on the ground; "facts" mobilized through state paperwork; administrative debates over the progress and ultimate aims of colonization; beliefs about French mastery over "savage" peoples; clashing ideas about the value of colonies and how to measure it; proposals for reform couched in sweeping visions of imperial grandeur; and searching meditations on the very identity of the state all emerged as features of French administrative culture in the half century before 1715. To be sure, the shape of those arguments and ideas had changed over subsequent decades, as had the language used to articulate them and the settings in which they were put forth. But they were fundamentally indebted to ways of seeing and thinking about the colonies that had been established around the turn of the eighteenth century.

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When we look closely at that formative period of overseas expansion, one of the most striking themes that surfaces is the frequency with which the demands of governing ports and colonies led royal officials to violate some of their most cherished aristocratic values. Whether they were working with their hands among commoners in the shipyard, haggling over the nuts and bolts of trade with merchants, or playing *Onontio* for an audience of "savage" headmen, they routinely shed their

[11] Silhouette to Choiseul, 8 February 1759, ANOM COL C11A, vol. 104, ff. 456-461v.

customary manners of self-presentation. In doing so, they drew upon a constellation of habits that primed them to perform across cultures and social ranks. From an early age, they learned how to play a variety of roles, and they lived their lives as if they were constantly on display—for God, for king, for patrons, subordinates, subjects, and allies. Their performative skill was not so much consciously honed as deeply ingrained: the economies of honor, power, and salvation that determined their place in this world and the next demanded that they exercise it.

That they deployed that skill in the course of policing settlers, artisans, merchants, slaves, Indians, and others in the kingdom's most diverse and marginal places would be less striking if it did not deviate so sharply from what scholars have taught us to expect. When they write about European empires, historians often proceed as if state officials are easily understood. An earlier generation of writers cast them as heroes—"caesars of the wilderness," "fighting governors," standard-bearers of civilization in wigs and cravats.[12] Fortunately, historians of late have assumed a more critical stance toward administrative records, but the fundamental image of administrators has remained largely unchanged. Even as they misunderstand Native cultures or fail in their duties, French officials still appear as confident, fully-formed emissaries of "Frenchness," "Europeanness," or "absolutism." And on some level, they are assumed to be "like us."[13]

The truth, however, is that they were not. Their habit of treating life like one long theatrical display is only one way in which that was so. They did not think like

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[12] Nute, *Caesars of the Wilderness*; Charles Colby, *The Fighting Governor: A Chronicle of Frontenac* (Toronto: Glasgow, Brook & Co, 1915).

[13] The point holds equally well for other agents of empire, as Allan Greer has argued in the case of missionaries. Greer, *Mohawk Saint*, ix-x.

us, learn like us, practice governance like us, construct *science* like us, or maintain an integrated sense of themselves as we do (or as we believe we do). Their political, spiritual, and intellectual frames of reference were remarkably different from our own. In the course of researching and writing this dissertation, I was repeatedly reminded of their strangeness. Their motives rarely felt accessible or coherent to me, which often made it difficult to interpret them coherently. I found adopting an angle of vision trained on individuals and the ways in which they imposed order on their experience to be a useful means to structure my own thinking. I am aware, however, that "structure" can be a euphemism for "simplify," and that I might have written up my findings in a more complicated way. What I mean to suggest in the preceding chapters, however imperfectly, is that we can learn a great deal about these European officials by acknowledging the distance between their world and our own.

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